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THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

Quarterly Record.

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THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE."

"An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove:
'Tis not enough that we with sorrow sigh,
That we the wants of pleading man supply,
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal:
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go;
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plants relief for coming miseries."

VOLUME X. NEW SERIES.

LONDON:
RAGGED SCHOOL UNION, 12 AND 13, EXETER HALL;
KENT & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

TO OUR READERS.

SINCE the following preface was in type a grievous loss has befallen the Ragged School Union in the death of its noble President, which, although foreseen, has nevertheless come with the force of a great surprise. His removal from the theatre of human affairs, where his presence was so essential, appears on this side the great dividing curtain like the extinction of some natural and necessary force. *A special number commemorative of the sad event will shortly be issued.*

Forty-one years have passed since the establishment of the Ragged School Union, and the present volume completes the thirty-seventh annual record of the Society's operations.

The Report for the past year was encouraging. The figures gave convincing evidence that Christian activity on behalf of poor children had not relaxed, and the growth in the number of Institutes, Reading Rooms, Drawing and Singing Classes, Bands of Hope, and Temperance Societies showed that the welfare of young people over the school age was becoming a matter of increasing importance.

Magic Lantern Entertainments during last winter were most popular. The lanterns and slides of the Union were in constant requisition.

The enlarged attendance at Day Schools, and the extended knowledge of letters thereby acquired by poor children, increase the importance of the work of the Society—for it is more than ever imperative that not only Scriptural knowledge should be given on Sundays and week evenings, but that the children should be brought into affectionate contact with those who care for their souls and who are Christ's image on earth.

Notwithstanding the stringency of the rules regulating the bestowal of the Prizes awarded by the Ragged School Union, 814 old scholars were found to have fulfilled the conditions, and came up at the Annual Meeting in May to receive them. Lord Shaftesbury, to his inexpressible grief, was not present to give them, but an excellent substitute was provided in the person of Sir Robert Carden, M.P.

A novel feature of the year was a presentation to the Earl of a testimonial and an illuminated address by a number of old Ragged Scholars, in grateful recognition of his great services to them.

The question of the housing of the poor has been forced upon public attention, and has engaged in a formal and serious manner the consideration of Parliament, which has resulted in some enactments that it is hoped will do something to lessen the misery and immorality that accrue from promiscuous overcrowding. The sad condition of poor children huddled together in comfortless homes has obtained great publicity, and has awakened a widespread desire to relieve the gloomy monotony of their condition. This Society, always alert on errands of pity, has provided for such in their two Homes, one at Thursley and the other at East Grinstead, a fortnight's change and enjoyment. Fresh air, blue skies, green fields, the songs of birds, and an abundant supply of good wholesome food with kind oversight, are in striking contrast to their daily surroundings.

The claims of Ragged Schools since our last issue have been enforced on several occasions and in various ways. By Dr. Oswald Dykes in an eloquent discourse preached in the Scotch Church, Regent Square; by the able and eloquent paper of Professor Leone Levi; by the interesting paper of Mr. John MacGregor on the Ragged School Union Tree, and by Marianne Farningham's poem on the same topic; and by the meeting at Grosvenor House, on which occasion Lord Shaftesbury, in a speech of more than an hour's duration, set forth in interesting detail the work that the Society had accomplished over a period of forty years.

We have had during the year to mourn the loss of two old and valued members of the Committee, Thomas Brooker and Henry C. Pierson, who for many years were constant attendants at its monthly meetings, and greatly helped the objects of the Society by their wise counsel. Besides these, other earnest and unselfish workers have been removed—viz., Miss Broom at Gravesend and Thomas Dalton at Limehouse. Others more extensively known—Earl Cairns, Lord Mayor Nottage, and the Rev. Paxton Hood—are not only lost to us, but are missed over the wide field of philanthropy.

We thank the friends who have lightened our editorial labours by contributions of any kind, and hope that their example will be widely imitated.

R. J. C., *Editor.*

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DONATIONS and **SUBSCRIPTIONS** in aid of Ragged Schools will be thankfully received at the **OFFICES OF THE SOCIETY**, by the Secretary, Mr. J. KIRK, 12 and 13, Exeter Hall, Strand; by Messrs. HATCHARD & SON, 187, Piccadilly; Messrs. NISBET & Co., 21, Berners Street; and by the Bankers, Messrs. BARCLAY, BEVAN, & Co. Lombard Street.

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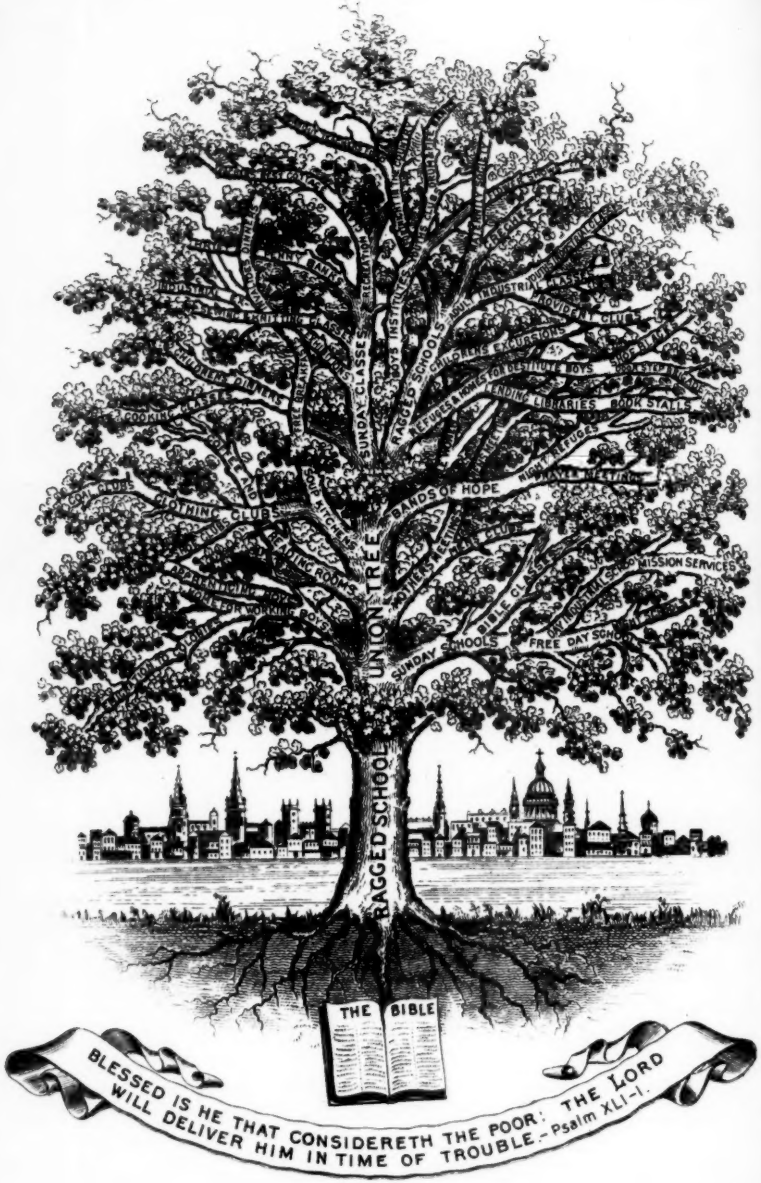


Charles Montague Lithographer 4 Bedford Square E.

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

JANUARY, 1885.

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION TREE.

About forty years ago the Committee of the Ragged School Union, which had twenty schools to manage, informed British Christians "that, having observed with regret the great number of children, ragged and filthy, who constantly infest our streets and alleys to idle, to steal, or to do mischief, resolved to establish schools expressly for that destitute and depraved class, in the very localities, courts, and alleys where they abound."

Two score years have passed, and thoughtful persons are entitled to ask—

(1) "Have Ragged Schools become less useful or less needful now, when Sunday Schools, Day Schools, and Board Schools (all of them using the Bible) are placed alongside of our own?"

(2) "Will Ragged Schools be always needed?" The short answer to this is, Such schools must be needed so long as the children of that class abound.

(3) "Then how many such children must we expect to deal with?"

On this point hear Professor Leone Levi, an excellent authority in these matters. He says that if by any means we collect a crowd of 12,000 ordinary average men, women, and children, it may be justly assumed from experience that one thousand of the crowd "fail to live on their own resources," "do not get on without help from strangers." This thousand want earnings, or food, or shelter, or all of them; in fact, they want "something good down here, and something better up there," and most of them have got it nowhere.

Now, after an experience of forty years in Ragged Schools and

other similar institutions, at home and abroad, I feel that the question may well be asked, "Are all these means really needful and useful now?"*

Of course, the chief object of our work ought to be, and is, the salvation of the souls of these dear children, for "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

But how do we know that Ragged Schools are really useful for this great purpose? "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20), and this test applies to Societies as well as to persons.

Look, then, at the pretty picture of the Ragged School tree† on the frontispiece of our Report. The tree is planted in dark soil indeed, but the mighty agency of "life" draws sweet and comely fruit from dull, dark mould. And the "Dresser of the Vineyard" has promised to "dig about it" Himself (Luke xiii. 8). The main root of the tree of life goes straight down to the Word of God, "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2). The "under gardeners"—teachers of Ragged Schools—gain from their work an experience and instruction which is invaluable for their noble duties. What patience, what perseverance, what humbling, what thanksgiving and joy, does spring from this earnest, fruitful labour! What a glorious future is for them in the great assembly above, and what will it be to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"! (Matt. xxv. 21). This joy is known well now by John Pounds and Joseph Payne.

How wondrous, too, is the ingenuity of Christian love! For every one a place; for every want a help and full supply; for every tear a loving consolation.

It is an unceasing work. The old workers die, but new workers are hired by the Master. How can it be dull when new life and light pour in, and new modes of usefulness are invented?

Sunday and week-day, morning, noon, and night, each hour has

* It is fair to state that the chairman of the School Management Committee, and the chairman of the Industrial Schools Committee of the first London School Board (being also himself a Ragged School teacher), considered that the action of the School Board would necessarily render Ragged Schools needless for London, but this opinion is now seen to be erroneous.

† The tree was designed and painted in a large form by a member of the Committee specially for the International Health Exhibition at South Kensington last year.

new duties and blessings for teachers and scholars. The homeless is helped for home, the starving for a meal, the sick for medicine, the naked for raiment, the sad and weary for bright friendship, and all for practical sympathy.

The urchin of three years ago who scrambled over palings in the street now stands in bright-red jacket to earn a fortune by his brush. The shivering beggar-boy of last year is high on the mizen-mast of a training-ship with a bright-blue jacket and ruddy cheeks. The slattern face of that wan girl who begged is now full of smiles while she pushes the perambulator. Gardeners and farm boys at the Refuges are now in the colonies, where I have seen them with capital houses of their own. Others stop in the Homes for Working Boys, and pay for their house and living.

Much good can be done in these matters by merely human sympathy, but how much more when truly Christian love is fully engaged. It is far above the dignity of an earldom to be known among ragged children as "our own Lord Shaftesbury."

In the following extract from "Motives for Missions" (published by the present writer in 1853) we have a striking picture of human nature and of Divine grace:—

"A young female teacher was speaking of God and His providence to her class, when she was interrupted by a little girl who said, 'I don't care for God, I don't love Him; I don't love Christ, and I don't love you.' A murmur of disapprobation arose among her companions; they said that they loved their mistress, and that they were willing to share their bread with her. 'And would you not do the same?' asked the young female of the child. 'No,' answered she. 'Well,' added the teacher, with tenderness, 'I should be happy to share my bread with you; and if you don't love me, I love you, for I come every day a long distance to teach you.' The child could not resist words so tender; she threw herself into the arms of her she had offended, covering her with tears and kisses."

The heart of the Ragged School Union has abundant sympathy for extension of efforts, both in new kinds and in new places.

Children taught and blessed and saved, even in close alleys, powerfully appeal to other parents' hearts, and Mothers' Meetings spring from the frowsy dens of poverty.

The Bible used in the school gives a savour to the dullest life, and so "the Book and its mission" enters the poorest home.

Clubs for clothes, and savings for a country excursion, and even a class for music, soon become possible, until the child, the family, the street close, and the neighbourhood all get happier.

Penny Banks for the provident, Sewing and Knitting Classes, Coal Clubs and Invalid Dinners, *Crèches* for babies, Bookstalls for families, Mothers' Meetings—and why not another list in future of more and different fruits from this fertile branch of the Gospel tree? All these claim our serious attention; and is it possible that this growing tree is to be nipped by lack of funds?

"He that hath pity upon the poor *lendeth* unto the Lord" (Proverbs xix. 17). If you approve the security, lodge some money there. JOHN MACGREGOR.

HELP IS NEEDED!

THE funds of the Union being urgently in need of increased contributions, *an appeal from* 24, *Grosvenor Square, London, W., bearing the signature of Lord Shaftesbury, has been freely circulated.*

He says to the benevolent public, and to the friends of Ragged Schools in particular, "In the distribution of your Christmas bounty, may I urge consideration of the claims of the Ragged School Union, which for more than forty years has done so much by God's blessing to alleviate the poorest class of children?

"At present there are nearly two hundred Missions for this purpose in London alone, most of which depend more or less upon the resources of the Parent Society. About fifty thousand children in Day, Sunday, and Week Evening Schools are under the Christian and sympathetic care of upwards of three thousand voluntary teachers."

His Lordship continues: "Long and varied experience has fully proved to me that the Ragged School parental system is the only one whereby the most forlorn and needy class of children can be effectually reached."

Such an appeal will not go unheeded. Friends will please send their contributions to Mr. J. Kirk, at the Society's offices.

OUR POOR CHILDREN.

AT this season of the year, when children in well-to-do homes are loaded with gifts from loving friends, it is well that they should

be reminded of their little brothers and sisters who are in rags and in want of food.

Children's tender hearts are quickly moved to pity, and their pleadings with those able to help are sure to prevail. As an outlet for their loving sympathy, parcels of clothing and gifts in money to provide food will be gladly received at the office of the Ragged School Union, Exeter Hall, Strand.

ADDRESS TO THE "RAGGED SCHOOL TREE."

THE following verses appeared many years since in an early volume of the *Ragged School Union Magazine*, and are reproduced on account of their appropriateness :—

"From me is thy fruit found."—Hosea xiv. 8.

The "Ragged School Tree," the "Ragged School Tree,'
Is the object of pleasure and interest to me ;
The goodly *seed* sown, has been watered by tears,
And has *budded* and *fruited* in answer to prayers.

With its *root* in a *soil*, the richest and best,
Where flows a pure *spring* of *water*, most blest,
No marvel such *fruit* on its *branches* has place
As proves a meet *offering* at the THRONE of *all grace*.

So precious indeed the *fruit* it sends forth,
Proclaiming at once its unspeakable worth ;
So sweet in its flavour, that all who partake
Return to their *labour* of *love* for Christ's *sake ;*

Delighting to *plough* and to *reap* the fair ground
Where hope of fresh produce and plenty is found ;
To *plant* and to *water*,—then leave the "increase"
To HIM who grants freely the *riches* of *grace !*

Then hail to the "*tree*," let us *dig it about*,
And nurture it still with petitions devout ;
Till *its branches* no more shall to peril be given,
Through *union* for ever with the bless'd "VINE" in *Heaven !*

H. C. B.

MUST THE LITTLE ONES PERISH?

A Word for Ragged Schools.

Being a Sermon preached by the Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, D.D., in Regent Square Presbyterian Church, London, on Sunday morning, November 23rd, 1884.

This great discourse, from which want of space permits the selection of only one or two passages, was founded on the words: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew xviii. 14).

That the poorest class among our people should exist in a condition of miserable degradation is unhappily no new thing in England. In very early times the poorest class were serfs bound down to forced labour with no rights before the law, they and their families herding like litter in hovels scarcely fit for cattle. But without going so far back in our history let us recall the ignorance, the grossness, and the brutality which prevailed among the poor in the early part of last century, before the preaching of Whitfield, the organisation of Wesley, the Sunday Schools of Raikes, or the philanthropy of Howard and Wilberforce had begun to purify the lower as well as the upper life of England. Few things give one better hope for the future of our country than to contrast the temper of society towards every social question to-day with that which obtained a hundred and fifty years ago, when Methodism first was heard of in London. What a quickening and deepening has there been since then in the religious life of all the churches! How much more sensitive is the public conscience! What a crowd of reforms, political and moral, have lightened since those times the lot even of the poorest, and how loud is the response which every cry of hardship or distress evokes from the Christian sympathies of generous people through all ranks in society!

A retrospect like this may well call for gratitude to Almighty God and forbid us to despair in face of those evils which remain to be grappled with. And we do need such encouragement, for, in spite of all that has been accomplished, the condition of our lower toiling masses presents features to-day which almost paralyse hope. Take this one fact, for instance—that about a million of our people are actually paupers, in receipt of legal relief, without counting the millions more who must be dependent on these; without adding to this awful total the multitudes only a shade above the workhouse who are assisted by private charity, it is evident enough that our social system rests upon a widespread massive foundation of discontent, wretchedness, and hopeless penury.

But it is with the "little ones" I have mainly to do this morning

and I pray you only to consider the prospects of a babe who sees the light in a London "slum."

The destitute classes of English towns may be growing from day to day at a rate we personally cannot check, from causes we can do next to nothing to hinder. And their children may be born to perish in crowds which from their magnitude render all we can do to save them as a drop in the bucket. No matter: it is not our Father's will that so much as one of them all should perish; and since He cares for them one by one, so ought we; and if it be only in units, one here and another there, that they can be saved at all, still, in Christ's name and the Father's, let us do it! This, I take it, is the sacred and Christian-like impulse under which your Ragged Schools were first started forty years ago; and under this same conviction of personal responsibility, many of you, and thousands more, continue at the work to this day.

It ought to be known that while Ragged Schools do in some few instances supplement Board instruction, they are to a far larger extent Sunday and Night Schools. At these the attendance is between 40,000 and 50,000. So that the chief educational work done by voluntary agency for these perishing little ones is after all religious. The social condition of the poorest calls for a separate agency to reach them. The forlorn, the homeless, the precociously depraved, the almost unmanageable, whom no one else will have—these are the chosen field on which the true Ragged School teacher, moved by a divine compassion, is ready to expend love and pains and prayer; for are they not ready to perish?

Once more: mere school teaching, be it on Sunday or on week-day, falls a long way short of the benevolent activities associated with your work. In fact, the old name of a Ragged *School* has become in most cases a misnomer, for generous hearts could not go down among the perishing offspring of the slums without discovering that to save them, in any true sense, called for not one species of help, but many; not the lessons of a teacher merely, but the all-embracing manifold thoughtful kindness of a parent. Your neglected child is really fatherless, motherless; not always an orphan, it is true; but can I call *him* a father who starves the child to feed his own appetite, gives him curses for bread, and by brutal violence makes home a place of terror? or *her* a mother who poisons her very milk with gin, and sends her maiden daughter to the streets in her teens? God forbid: thousands on thousands of these innocents, whom we offer yearly to our modern Molochs, have no parent worthy the name save God in heaven and you, the gentle-hearted Christian whom Christ has moved to pity them. From you alone can they learn what that

sweet and awful name of a "Father" may mean. You must show them by loving deeds what manner of person He is whom you teach them with clasped hands to call "Our Father which art in heaven!" At your hands, therefore, have they to receive (if they ever receive it at all) all that sustenance for their wants, that sympathy in their troubles, that nursing in their sickness, that care for their morals, that provision for their future, which they ask in vain at the hands of brutalised fathers and unsexed mothers. It is surprising what a crowd of benevolent agencies have in this way come to spring out of the lowly stem of the original Ragged School. Help is found for the body, as food and clothing; day nurseries for the infants, soup kitchens in winter, excursions in summer, boot and shoe clubs, medical skill for the sick, and country air for the convalescent. Recreation is provided for the active—the gymnasium, the swimming-bath, the magic-lantern, and the musical band. Thrift and temperance are sedulously cultivated at all ages, while for those over school age employment is provided, sometimes at service, sometimes as apprentices, sometimes in the Shoeblack Brigade or the Flower Girl Mission. Add to all this the usual machinery of a religious mission in outdoor and indoor services, Mothers' Meetings, Ragged Churches, tract distributing, and the rest, and you will see that what set out with being a mere school for ragged children has developed into a great Christian organisation for rescuing the perishing and lifting up "little ones" who seemed born only to perish, into intelligent, useful, and happy lives here, and a blessed hope through Christ for the life to come.

Work for the young must at all times be the most hopeful of work. In proof of the efficiency of the Ragged School Union, as evinced by its substantial results, I may be allowed to cite a letter I have this morning received from the venerable nobleman who confessedly stands foremost among the philanthropists of the last half-century—Lord Shaftesbury. He writes: "We have taken off the streets more than three hundred thousand children, all of whom would have been numbered among the 'dangerous classes,' and placed them, at home or abroad, where they could make a decent livelihood. My firm belief is that our blessed Lord never looked down on any movement with more grace and favour than on this one for the rescue of the most degraded and most helpless of the English race."

RAGGED SCHOOLS.

By Professor Leone Levi.

From this valuable paper, prepared specially to be read at one of the Conferences on Education which were held at the Health Exhibition, we cite a few passages.

The Education Act of 1870 is never intended to exclude any class, however low, from its all-embracing supervision. School attendance is, more or less, rendered compulsory, and yet the Committee of Council on Education reported in 1883, that while with our present population there might be 5,384,341 (1 in 5) on the register, and 4,486,950 (1 in 6) in average attendance, the returns show only 4,273,304 children on the register, and 3,127,214 in attendance. In other words, out of every 100 children of school age, for whom 86 school seats have been provided, we have only 79 scholars on the register, and 58 in daily attendance. Therefore, after all that has been done to secure a national system of education, upwards of 2,000,000 children fail to get all the benefit of our elementary schools. For a large number of these there is but little excuse for their absence from school, but for the lowest classes of children much may be said. The ragged, the hungry, the homeless, are not in a mood for instruction. They migrate from place to place, and so evade the pursuit of the school visitor. They must earn or beg, or get somehow a bare existence, and they are impelled to give to this their first thought. Neglected, abandoned by their parents, and cast away by those to whom they belong, the poor children soon learn to neglect themselves, and so they become a danger to the State and the object of solicitude on the part of the moralist and philanthropist.

Children of this class may be met with in four distinct stages of degradation—viz., the Ragged School, the Industrial School, the Reformatory School, and the Prison. The Ragged School is the asylum of the destitute; the Industrial School of the dangerous and the abandoned; the Reformatory School of the fallen, but still reclaimable; the Prison of the depraved and the guilty. In England and Wales, in 1883, 387 children under twelve years of age, and 4,888 of twelve and under sixteen years of age, in all 5,275, were committed to prison. 4,517 were in the Reformatory Schools, and 11,752 were under detention in the Industrial Schools, giving a total of 21,544. What number of children attend the Ragged Schools I cannot say with any correctness. In the metropolis about 30,000 to 40,000 may be said to attend them. Taking the entire urban population in England and Wales, according to the census of 1881, at about 18,000,000, and assuming the same agencies to be more or less in

existence in all the towns as in the metropolis, the number of Ragged School children would be about 180,000, giving an aggregate, with those otherwise taken care of, of 200,000, that being about 10 per cent. of the number of absentees in the elementary schools.

The utmost ingenuity is evinced by Ragged Schools in the adaptation of their works of beneficence to the varied exigencies of the children in the districts where they labour. Some are more educational, some more missionary; some embrace industrial work, and some give themselves to reward habits of honesty and industry. Above all, conscious of the uninteresting, dulling, crushing life of the children at home and in the streets, the Ragged Schools strive to give children means of recreation. The magic-lantern in the winter, combining instruction and amusing pictures, the excursion in summer, and for the frail and infirm a fortnight's residence in a cottage in the country—all help to cheer the poor children's hearts and to inspire in them hopes of better days.

More especially distinctive of the Ragged School is their attention to the physical wants of the children. The Soup Kitchen, the Christmas Dinner, the Clothing Fund, are necessary parts of the apparatus of the Ragged Schools. At the same time, it cannot be too firmly asserted that the object of Ragged Schools is not to pauperise, but to lift up—not to foster a dependent spirit, but to inspire self-reliance.

One of the most useful functions of these missions of benevolence is the encouragement they give to thrift by their Penny Banks, Sick Provident Funds, Bands of Hope, &c. Long before the Post-office Savings Banks were organised many Ragged Schools had theirs.

The Union might well appeal to the State for support, seeing that they aid the prevention of crime, and by their action set a limit to pauperism. But the Ragged Schools are religious institutions, and they must preserve their full freedom to act without any trammels from the State. If any doubts existed that the Education Act of 1870 would render the Ragged Schools unnecessary, the facts given respecting the attendance at the public elementary schools will effectually dispel them absolutely. *The Ragged Schools as missions of benevolence are thus as needful now as ever;* for poverty and wretchedness will, it is to be feared, always remain in our borders. And so the Ragged School Union confidently appeals for such funds as may be needed for its noble work. At this moment not a few of the old Ragged Schools require to be rebuilt, and like institutions are needed all over the country, but no funds are at hand sufficient to meet the want. A Shaftesbury Fund of £20,000 has been started for the purpose, and the Union trusts that a handsome response may be

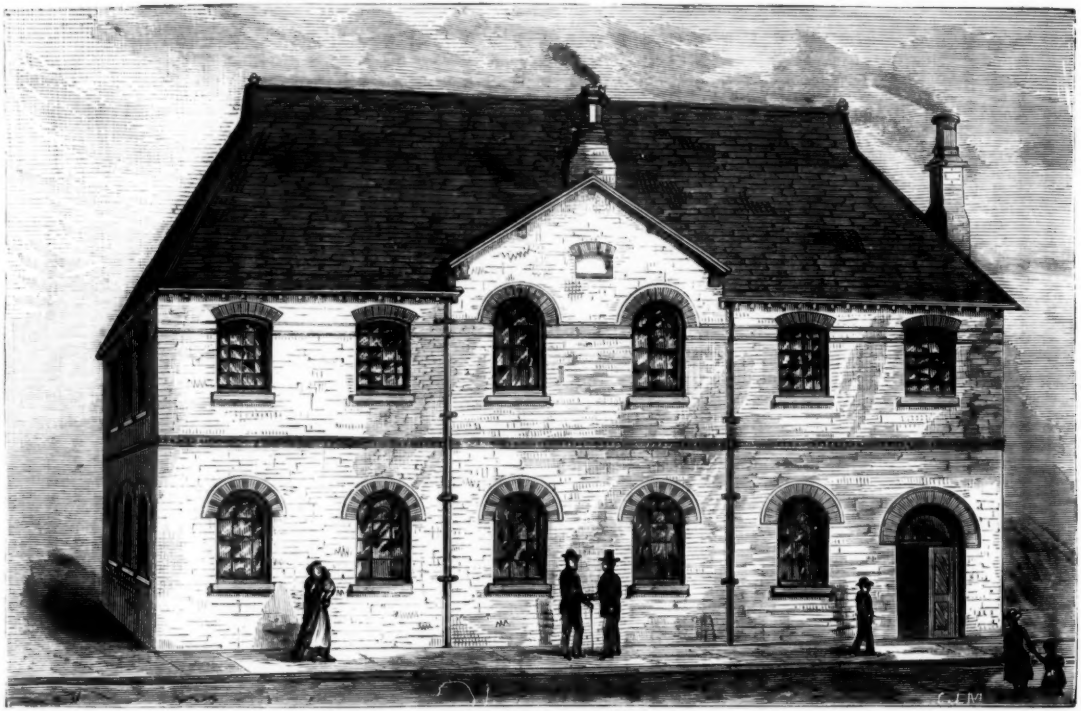
given to the appeal. As educational institutions of no mean order, as centres of benevolence of the purest and most diffusive character, as a means for bringing the different classes of society into close and friendly contact, Ragged Schools are invaluable, and they well deserve the sympathetic assistance of all who have the interests of the nation at heart.

LEICESTER RAGGED SCHOOL MISSION.

About eighteen years ago a Christian lady, whose house was situated in one of the poorest parts of Leicester, was talking with a dearly loved young friend about doing something for Jesus. She suggested that her young friend should leave tracts at some of the houses in the neighbourhood and at the same time invite the children to the Sunday School. The suggestion was heartily received, but a difficulty arose. The children in the courts visited were so ragged and forlorn that they could not be induced to attend the Sunday School of the parish and mix with the young people assembled there. What was to be done? Both the lady and her friend had read of Ragged Schools and earnestly wished there was one near. On the premises where this lady lived and adjoining the gardener's house was a large wash-house, and the thought struck both these friends, why not make use of this in which to gather these ragged children? The cordial consent of the other members of her family being given, the wash-house was converted into a Ragged School, and in December, 1866, the Sunday School was opened with five children; the lady, her friend, and another member of her Bible-class being the teachers. The servants of the household entered heartily into the plan and rendered constant and ungrudging help. Hungry little faces beamed with delight as they received some broken food from the hands of the servants after being taught the story of Jesus and His love.

The school grew so fast that the wash-house became over-full and the infants had to be taught in a large summer house in the extensive garden, and seven teachers were required. Soon after, to their great grief, the lady and her family had to leave their house to live in a distant part of the town.

What was to become of the scholars? They could not think; but God was preparing the way for the work to extend, for soon one friend found a room, and God raised up another to become superintendent, who ever since has remained in this position, and with his whole heart now directs the work. On the 26th of April, 1868, the superintendent and seven teachers, with 69 scholars, took possession of the new room in Belgrave Gate.



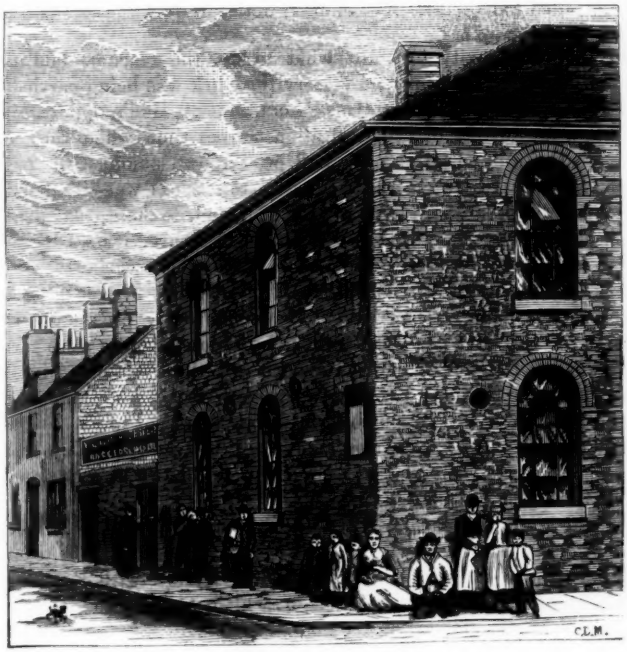
NEW BUILDING, ELEVATION TO BEDFORD STREET.

See page **16.**

See page 16.

NEW BUILDING, ELEVATION TO BEDFORD STREET.

It was not at all a pretentious schoolroom, being only the upper storey of a timber loft secured on Sundays for the modest rental of two shillings per week, but it was a very Bethel to the teachers and their ragged classes. The earnest devotion of this little band of workers soon attracted larger numbers of the ragged children of the neighbourhood, and in twelve months' time the school had increased to 138 scholars and 18 teachers. The success of the venture being now evident, a meeting of its friends was held to put it upon a sound



BUILDINGS EVACUATED AND PULLED DOWN.

basis and provide for its extension and support. Rules were framed a committee appointed, and the first annual report issued.

A new departure was now taken. Two rooms in Church Gate (formerly used as a shoe factory) were obtained and a Free Day School started in June, 1869, with 14 scholars to commence with. The young friend whose remark led to the formation of the Ragged School became mistress of the Day School, and for ten years it was carried on under her management, increasing in numbers to 200 scholars. Ultimately

it was handed over to the Leicester School Board, who made special provision for the children. Meanwhile many vicissitudes overtook the work. In 1870 another removal was effected to a large room in Yeoman Lane. Here the Sunday School increased to 326 scholars and 24 teachers, and many branches of Christan work were added. Three years were spent here. In 1872 the courage and faith of the teachers were sorely tried. A severe epidemic of small-pox swept the town. Scholars sickened and died. Sickness laid low the superintendent and several of the teachers. The funds became exhausted, and friends failed to support. As a climax, notice to quit was served by the owner of the premises.

In their perplexity to know what to do, the teachers laid their difficulties before Him for whose glory the work was being carried on, and again they realised that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Within a few weeks of the expiration of the time when they were compelled to quit, a large music hall, well known amongst the poorer classes as the "Gladstone Hall," became to let. It was situated in a very desirable locality for a Ragged School, and, to their great joy, the teachers were informed that two friends had secured it on a lease for seven years and offered it to the committee for their work.

At Christmas, 1872, the teachers and their scholars took possession of this music hall, and for seven years vigorously prosecuted their mission in this district. Beneath the hall liquor vaults were carried on, and so a Band of Hope was started and the war carried into the enemy's camp. Sunday Evening Gospel Services were commenced in the large hall and have been continued to the present time.

The Sunday School increased to 400 scholars and the Day School in proportion, and the work became widely known in the town as "The Gladstone Hall Ragged School."

As the time approached when the lease would expire it became evident that it would not be possible to get it renewed; the teachers therefore set to work to raise a "Building Fund" with the hope of being able to purchase premises in which to continue the work without fear of molestation. The great difficulty of obtaining subscriptions to support the Free Day School also determined the committee to give up this branch of their work when the lease expired.

During 1880, 1881, and 1882 temporary premises were occupied, the schools being divided between two buildings in different streets. Meanwhile the constitution of the school was revised; the basis was made purely evangelical and undenominational, and its name altered to "Leicester Ragged School Mission." The building fund slowly grew, and the teachers waited until God should open the way for the realisation of their hopes. Just at the time when the funds had reached the point at which it seemed prudent to

make a move, an offer was made to the committee of premises which were very suitable for the work. These consisted of a large chapel, two schoolrooms, seven classrooms, with a cottage for a caretaker, situated in George Street and Bedford Street, in the very heart of the locality in which the Ragged School originated, and amongst the homes of the people who had all along attended it. For sixty years a Primitive Methodist Church had laboured here, and now being about to build a larger edifice some distance off, they offered to dispose of the old premises for a Ragged School. Terms were soon made, the sum of £1,700 being paid for the block, and in October, 1882, with great joy, the scholars were transferred to their new home, now their very own. Although a debt of £1,000 still remains to be paid, the teachers are assured that they have done right in taking this step, and that God, who has opened the way for an extension of His work, will in due time provide the necessary means to maintain it.

The blessing of the Lord has indeed rested upon the mission since its removal here, for very soon the Sunday School increased to 600 scholars, and the many branches of missionary effort of which the Sunday School is the centre have likewise increased.

The following figures from the last Annual Report will convey an idea of the varied character and extensive nature of the work the teachers have been enabled to carry on in their new buildings during the past year:—

STATISTICS OF THE WORK IN GEORGE STREET DURING 1883.

SUNDAYS.	Number of Meetings.	Average Attendance.
Children's Services—Morning	52	216
Afternoon School (600 on the books)	52	333
Gospel Services for Adults—Evening	52	120
Men's Bible Class—Morning	50	10
WEEK EVENINGS.		
Mothers' Meeting	35	11
Girls' Working Class	29	17
Teachers' Preparation Class	36	10
Wednesday Service for Adults	6	30
Band of Hope (310 members)	26	92
Women's Temperance Society (85 members)	20	33
Saturday Prayer Meetings	52	20
Singing Classes	47	22
Bible Readings for Parents	10	10
Improvement Classes	9	10
Services of Song and Entertainments	5	200
Special Three Weeks' Mission in October and November	15	80
Tea Meetings and School Treats	13	180

In all 509 meetings, representing a total of 46 552 attendances during the year 1883.

In addition to these we must add the following :—

Open Air Preaching on 13 occasions.
Young Men's Association (Reading, Conversation, &c.).—Rooms open 72 evenings.
Library (1,000 vols).—Members 116, number of exchanges 871 ; open 24 evenings.
Penny Bank.—Open 52 evenings ; depositors 156, number of deposits 1,650.
Tract Distribution.—Districts 21, number of visitors 27, houses visited weekly 530, exchanges of tracts 9,331.

At the time the purchase of these premises was made it was understood that the chapel was in a very dilapidated condition through age, and that it would not be fit for regular use ; but owing to the extensive size of the schoolrooms the teachers thought they should not require to make use of it for some time to come. The increase of the work, however, being so rapid, they were compelled this year to consider how to deal with the chapel in order to make it available. A closer examination seemed to leave no alternative but to pull it down, and again the difficulty of funds was overcome by the offer of the local authorities to purchase a portion of the frontage in order to widen the street, and by the kind help of friends. Plans for erecting a two-storey building with commodious mission-rooms were passed, and the old chapel is now a thing of the past, and the new mission-rooms are being rapidly advanced, and will, it is hoped, be ready to be occupied by the beginning of 1885.

When the new rooms are completed the teachers hope to have even larger schools, and they trust that for many years to come the glorious Gospel of our blessed Lord will be taught within its walls.

Of the present staff of teachers sixteen have been in the work from ten to sixteen years, and four have been scholars in the school.

If space allowed many incidents might be narrated to show that the work of the past years has not been fruitless, though in Ragged School work we are constantly reminded of the truth of that scripture, "One soweth and another reapeth." The lady to whose efforts the mission owes its origin still lives (though an invalid) to rejoice in the blessing that has attended her venture, and a few incidents from her pen in connection with the earlier history of the mission must conclude this sketch.

"When we commenced our Ragged School in 1866 it was a winter of more than usual distress ; many were out of work for weeks through no fault of their own, and as they could not buy clothes for their children they were glad to send them to the school in the wash-house. We remember well one family, how clean the five used to come, the girls in large pinafores, and the boy in a slop ; for their hard-working mother used to wash out their only garments on Saturday, so that they might be clean on Sunday. We often noticed how hungry they

looked; they hardly ever missed coming, and I do not think the teachers had ever to complain of them. Now hear what has become of them. The eldest girl only left the school a little while before she married, her husband being one of the scholars also, and we trust they are both living Christian lives. The eldest brother made an open profession of faith in Jesus, is now a teacher and caretaker of the Ragged School Mission; and another sister, after being received into the visible church, became a teacher, and the youngest is in Miss E. W—'s Bible-class. But though some of our scholars were children of the respectable poor, by far the majority had drunken parents. E. and L. King were putting by with us for boots, and had managed to save about three shillings when one day their father called and said they were all leaving the town, and would we allow the children to have their money out of the Savings Bank. As he brought their card we gave him the three shillings. Judge our surprise when E. and L. came back to school and told us that their father took their card without telling them, and that he spent their money in drink. Take another example of the evil of drink. Three children of the name of V—— came to us, the eldest was about twelve years old. Robert was a boy very difficult to manage, but we who knew what his home was like were not surprised; his father was almost always drunk, and his mother, of whom the children were very fond, had just died, and Robert in his misery would run away from home, and when his father caught him he would tie something to his leg to prevent him moving. One day, when drunk, he was very angry with his eldest boy and tried to cut his throat with a knife lying on the table, a policeman was called in, and eventually the wretched man was imprisoned, and his three children were sent to the workhouse. One afternoon Robert appeared at school, having run away from the Union, giving as an excuse the tale that he was so knocked about there. This we knew was untrue, for the master was a kind Christian man, so we asked the gardener to go and let him know where the runaway was, and soon he sent down a kind old man to fetch the poor boy back. When the father's time was up the children were returned to him, and once more we had them as scholars; but Robert grew more and more unhappy, and more and more wicked, and one day he entered one of the day-schools and stole the master's watch, which was lying about, and then offered to sell it to a boy for a shilling and a pipe. This boy felt sure it must have been stolen, and gave information, and Robert was sentenced to one month's imprisonment and five years' reformatory. The superintendent and his teacher went to see him in prison, and the warder kindly locked them alone with him in his cell, but nothing they could say seemed to

touch him. He said he always understood that reformatories were such comfortable places, so he stole on purpose to be sent there, and not even the mention of his mother moved him. During his stay at Rock Ferry he conducted himself so well that his time was shortened, but we grieve to add that now he is as drunken and bad a man as his father. His poor wife seems in terror of him, and he tries to make himself believe that there is no God and no hereafter. The younger brother Henry has been in prison, but for the last three years he has tried hard to live a moral life. He has an affection for the old school, and comes from Northampton to be present at the Easter Monday tea for old scholars. This last time he brought his organette and played several sacred tunes. He told us he *longed for a home;* that though he was only seven at the time his mother died he could remember her, and that it was something like a home when she was alive; but since she was gone he had had no home, for he was miserable when he lived with his father, and now he was in lodgings he knew they were glad when he took himself out of their way. Poor fellow! he often used to sing when a little one, 'There's a home for little children above the bright blue sky;' God grant that he may know in his own experience that Jesus is the way to that home. One day a bold-looking girl came for admittance. We were glad in one sense to have her, but we felt we must keep a strict watch over her or she would be bold with the boys (for at that time our classes had to be mixed). She had only been two weeks with us when she was sent to prison for stealing. On being released she came back to us and conducted herself pretty well; but one Sunday she was not at school, and on inquiring of her mother she told us that she had not seen her daughter for three weeks, that she ran away from home, and they had since heard she was gone with some man, and the poor child was only *between thirteen and fourteen years of age.* Our school had only been in existence a week or two when three poorly-dressed girls and their little brother came for admittance. They were most satisfactory pupils, for they never missed coming, and were quick in learning and very attentive. One day the little boy, who was in the infant class, was absent, and during the week the superintendent went to the lodging-house where they lived to see what was the matter. The mother heard the noise of the bath-chair (for the superintendent was an invalid), and came out of her room at the top of the stairs, but just as she was coming down to speak to her visitor, the little boy T—— and a younger brother rushed out of the room without a particle of clothing. The mother angrily ordered them back, and gave as an excuse for their appearance that they had been naughty and so she had taken away their clothes. But the fact of the

case was this: she and her husband both drank to excess, and she had pawned everything she could lay her hands on for spirits. You will thus see what a miserable home our poor girls had, and yet they kept coming to school year after year, and two of them have openly professed their faith in Christ; the younger girl is most respectably married, and the next one is a teetotaler and a teacher in the Ragged School; and the boy, we believe, is a member of a Christian church."

"Go labour on while it is day,
The world's dark night is hastening on;
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away;
It is not thus that souls are won.

"Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;
Be wise the erring soul to win;
Go forth into the world's highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in."

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SUNDAY RAGGED SCHOOL UNION.

THE annual meeting of the friends of the above Union was held in the Police Parade Room of the Salford Town Hall, under the presidency of the Mayor of Salford, Alderman Makinson. There was a very large attendance both at the tea and the subsequent meeting. Among the gentlemen supporting the Mayor on the platform were the Rev. A. Parkinson, Rev. R. Craig, Rev. John Reid, Mr. R. Johnson, Mr. J. Bowman, Mr. Bradbury, Mr. R. Le Mare, Mr. R. B. Taylor, Mr. W. Flanagan, Mr. Jos. Snape (hon. secretary), Mr. Jas. Howie (secretary), &c. During the tea the Dean of Manchester paid the company a short visit.

Mr. Snape read the report of the committee, which stated that to those who were of opinion that the Compulsory Education Acts had made Ragged Schools almost unnecessary, it was sufficient to point out that the Ragged Schools of Manchester and Salford are receiving and teaching every Sunday in the year 10,000 children who, were it not for these agencies, would be left to wander about the streets, exposed to all those mischiefs which Satan finds for idle hands to do. That Ragged Schools and other resources of civilisation are doing a good work was proved conclusively by the great diminution of crime which has taken place. The Chief Constable of Manchester reports

that the number of indictable crimes committed in 1884 was 2,602, against 4,306 committed in 1875. The decrease is nearly 40 per cent. There are twenty-nine schools in connection with the Union, and it is made a condition that each school shall be open on Sunday evenings for religious and moral instruction, but many of the schools are open morning and afternoon as well. These Sunday evening schools are managed by 55 superintendents, 30 secretaries, and 660 teachers. Most of the schools have also week-evening classes for the purpose of giving elementary and secular instruction to those children and young persons above thirteen years of age whose education has been neglected and who are busy at work during the day. The average attendance during the past twelve months has been 1,004. The instruction given is free of charge. The average attendance at the Sewing Classes has been 326, at the Adult Bible Classes the same, and at the Mission Services 1,361. In the Savings Bank the amount deposited was £2,384; the amount withdrawn, £2,188. Twelve schools possess Bands of Hope and Temperance Societies, the number of members being 1,816.

The Mayor made an eloquent address, and was followed by the Rev. Prof. Craig, Rev. W. J. Smith, Mr. R. Johnson, Rev. A. Parkinson, and Rev. J. Reid.

OVER-PRESSURE IN SCHOOLS ON STARVING SCHOLARS.

The London Association of Church School Managers and Teachers calls a meeting of its members once in six months; the last was held on November 29th in the board-room of the National Society, presided over by Lord Algernon Percy, M.P. The main subject for discussion was "*Over-pressure in Elementary Schools.*" The chairman said there was a considerable consensus of opinion that a certain amount of over-pressure existed, and an inquiry was demanded by men in whom the country would have confidence, to see if it did exist. And if it did exist, the system should be so changed as *to adapt itself to the different conditions of the children, and so prevent the children being forcibly adapted to the system.* The matter should be sifted down to the bottom and finally and for ever set at rest. After a full and free discussion the following resolution was adopted without one dissentient—viz., "That the experience of members of this

meeting, as well as the general testimony of persons who are in the position to give a trustworthy judgment, leads irresistibly to the conviction that there is a large amount of pressure in elementary schools affecting both teachers and children." Other resolutions were considered and agreed to, attributing the prevailing pressure in elementary schools to the way in which the provisions of the Education Code were administered, and to the system of making the largest portion of the annual grant depend upon the passes of the children according to standards which make no sufficient allowance for their gifts and external circumstances, and pledging the meeting to use every effort to call the attention of Parliament and the Education Department to the grievance with a view to its removal.

The same subject was under review at a large and influential meeting held in Exeter Hall last spring, at which the Earl of Shaftesbury said, "There does not live on the face of the earth a man who is more opposed to tyranny and oppression than Mr. Mundella, or any one more earnestly desirious of putting down all over-pressure as regards women and children." The meeting in Exeter Hall was held on March 26th, but Mr. Mundella had, six weeks previously, shown that the subject had not only been under his consideration, but that he was desirous of knowing the facts of the case, with a view to amendment, and for this purpose had called in the services of Dr. Crichton Brown to visit the schools, examine the children, and report to the Right Hon. *Anthony J. Mundella*, Vice-President of the Council on Education.

Dr. Crichton Brown lost no time in commencing and getting through his work. He received his commission from Mr. Mundella on February 16th, on May 1st he sent in his report to the Education Department, and on July 24th it was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons. This report fills fifty pages folio, and has been published. Dr. Crichton Brown, after a very laborious and critical examination of schools, scholars, pupil teachers, and students in training colleges, forms a very decided opinion that over-pressure *does exist* —not only exists, but is doing much mischief, and that that mischief will increase rather than diminish as years pass by unless some modification is made in the application of the Educational Code by which the difficulty can be met. Dr. Brown is of opinion that the fault is not so much in the Code as in the application of the Code. For he asserts that a large measure of relief may be given in the matter of over-pressure without any alteration in the Code, by a liberal interpretation under judicious direction of one of its present provisions —that sanctioning the withholding from examination of scholars of delicate health, obvious dulness, defective intellect, &c. It is on this

class of scholars specially that the over-pressure is burdensome and detrimental; and for them relief is specially sought. It would seem needful from a medical point, and it would be no small boon to scholars of more favoured circumstances to have some cessation of the present amount of over-pressure, for it is to them detrimental also, if not burdensome as well. There are clever scholars to whom the evils of over-pressure scarcely exist, for they with their mental power easily, and in short time, master their lessons, and are free for outdoor sports and games which induce to physical health and bodily strength, and are so fitted to make further mental progress with ease. Dr. Brown is of opinion that these clever children are about one-fourth of the number of scholars in London elementary schools, another fourth are the backward scholars, and the remaining half are of medium or average intelligence. The *clever* ones can easily accomplish all the work the Code requires of them each year in seven or eight months. The *medium* scholars can do it comfortably by steady work in the twelve months allowed. The *backward* scholars cannot fairly do it in the year unless pressed and sometimes hard pressed, in order to get as many as possible of them to make a passable appearance.

The existence of over-pressure would appear not only to be known by the Educational Department, but acknowledged, for in the Code of 1882 it is stated that "there have been many well-founded complaints of undue pressure on *backward scholars*."

It had been made the subject of repeated representations by large bodies of teachers and had been affirmed by school inspectors.

Many will be ready to ask, How and by what means is this over-pressure brought to bear on the scholars? And what are the evidences of it? Dr. Brown gives four—viz., I., Detention in school after school hours; II., Home-lessons; III., The testimony of the teachers; and IV., The condition of the children.

I. The *detention* is not a punishment for any negligence or fault on the part of the child, and it cannot be supposed it is the result of gratification on the part of the tired teachers.

Teachers declare that they find this detention absolutely necessary in order to meet the requirements of the inspector, secure a sufficient number of passes, and maintain the reputation of the school; and that it is impossible for a considerable proportion of children to prepare for the examination adequately in the ordinary school hours. The detention is most general for the months preceding the examination. In some schools the detention is short, perhaps only a quarter of an hour each day, and only 20 per cent. of the scholars detained; but in others much longer, and in some cases extending to one hour

and a half per day, with 50 per cent. of the children kept in, which amounts to over-pressure.

II. *Home-lessons* are credited with adding to the difficulty, which seems more prevalent in schools out of London than in it, and with the better class of scholars rather than those of a poorer class. Of the latter it would be almost vain to require home-lessons, for the reasons that the elder ones have to help at home or in some way to work, and so cannot get the needful time; and if they could get the time, how in their one-room home, with restless and noisy inmates, could they succeed? Where it has been tried the teachers have discovered that the home work has been done in so slovenly a way and required so much correction that it was time wasted, and no good resulted. The practice prevails more with the better class, and with more favourable results educationally. "But," Dr. Brown adds, "the principle of home work is bad in the case of young children, and even where that work is moderate in amount it is often sufficient to stir up and irritate an exhausted and feeble brain and so interfere with sleep. It is a worry, sometimes a torment, to a child, and prevents that relaxation and entire diversion of the current of thought which ought to follow upon liberation from school. And it is one of the instruments and signs of over-pressure, and is resorted to, in nine cases out of ten, because the work to be done in the course of the year cannot be compassed by a number of scholars within the proper school hours. The fact that a larger proportion of young children in London are now poring over books, racking their brains, straining their eyes, and rounding their backs, in those evening hours when they ought to be in bed, or gently subsiding towards slumber through busy idleness, is, I venture to think, a palpable evidence that over-pressure exists."

III. *The testimony of the teachers* is the third source of evidence, and has been given with no uncertain sound. The Doctor says, that "in the Associations of teachers, and at conferences they have held, they have emphatically declared that serious evils are accruing from the system under which they are compelled to work, and in my personal intercourse with the teachers of the schools I have visited, I have found an amount of unanimity on the subject of over-pressure which has impressed me much. I have conversed on the subject with upwards of sixty teachers, and have found only two who denied the existence of over-pressure. And the others not only admitted, but deplored it, and many of them expressed forcibly the pain they felt in having to apply it to the helpless children they are called on to teach. It is in vain to dispute that the teachers as a body, in London at least, believe most firmly in the existence of over-pressure, and that they are dis-

contented with their position chiefly because of the part they have to play in imposing it. Now, it appears to me that on this subject the teachers must be the best possible witnesses, as they know best, and indeed only know, the standard which it is necessary for them to attain, and the amount of hard driving that it takes to bring up a proper percentage of their scholars to it. It has been hinted that they are actuated in their agitation against over-pressure by class interests and private motives, being anxious to save themselves trouble, and to secure more public money upon easier terms. There are, no doubt, amongst teachers, as in every profession, confirmed grumblers and selfish sluggards; but I will not believe, after what I have seen of them, that they are as a body capable of lending themselves to an organised system of misrepresentation, or of subordinating the claims of duty to their own ease and aggrandisement. They have seemed to me, as a class, intelligent, upright, and kind-hearted; and I receive with confidence the deliberate statements they make as to the difficulties and trials of their calling."

IV. *The condition of the children* is the fourth evidence adduced by Dr. Brown, which he says is appreciable to common-sense, and would settle the question of over-pressure, not as their condition appears to the medical eye, but to any ordinary observer. In the extract from the Code of 1882, already quoted, it is stated that the over-pressure which has been complained of is on the *backward* scholars, and that statement supplies at once a clue to the incidence of the pressure in elementary schools. "In public schools, high schools, and middle-class schools it is the bright and clever children, those who are likely to take prizes, scholarships, and certificates, and do honour to their teachers and their schools, that are pressed; but in elementary schools it is the backward children that are so, and the difference in the incidence of the over-pressure in these two cases may, I believe, be shown to be followed by a corresponding difference in its pernicious effects. But it is with over-pressure as it affects backward children that I have now to do, and these backward children, it must be remarked, are of several different varieties. An ordinary observer visiting an elementary school would, with a little assistance, be able to pick out these backward children, and after a good look at them and a few questions to divide them into three sets—viz., 1, *Dull* children; 2, *Starved* children; 3, *Delicate* children. If after having compared merely the bodily condition of these three sets of backward children with that of the bulk of the class, he were shown the work which has to be got through in a year, and told that the backward children are expected to do exactly the same as those who are not backward and

at the same age, and that the reputation, comfort, and promotion, if not the emoluments of the teacher, will depend on the number of them that can be forced through the examination, his common-sense would guide him to the conclusion that over-pressure exists."

The range of educational over-pressure in elementary schools is not exactly co-extensive with the ranks of backward children. It includes a considerable proportion of children of the average intelligence who have attended irregularly, and have therefore to make up for leeway, and also for a few clever children, who, although more than equal to the examination, have either neglected to prepare for it in time, or to work for it, under the influence of that emotional excitement that the approach of an examination, as now conducted, never fails to create in a school, and that is really one of the most dangerous elements in educational over-pressure. There is no fact more certain than this, that mental labour is dangerous to health and shortens life just in proportion as emotional disturbance is mixed up with it. It is not so much the intellectual effort demanded in elementary schools, as the worry and anxiety mixed up with it, that do mischief and induce the ailments which I shall describe.

"It is the 'examination fever,' as it has been called, that leaves such unpleasant *sequelæ* behind it, and that fever is now endemic in the metropolis. It scorches through now one school and now another, but it is ever in our midst. Examinations, instead of being tests of school work, have become to a great extent its one great aim and guiding principle, and whatever educational fruits they may have yielded, they are producing, I am confident, a rich crop of nervousness."

Over-pressure in all its intensity, intellectual and emotional, operates chiefly on backward children, who, as already stated, may be roughly classified into the dull, the starved, and the delicate. Of dull children there is a considerable number in all elementary schools, their dulness ranging from mere slowness of apprehension (which may really mean lateness of evolution, but is none the less trying on that account to a teacher who has to work against time) up to a doltishness that would qualify for Earlswood. "I have seen in my visits to schools some imbeciles presenting the physical characteristics of mental defect, and yet these creatures the teachers were labouring to educate—a task as hopeless as that of pouring water into a sieve. It is to be remembered that imbecility may supervene at any point in mental evolution, and that it really consists in the arrest of brain growth at some stage of immaturity. The imbecile is a stereotyped baby or child, and cannot transcend the limits placed by its organisation. Education by the ordinary methods is thrown away upon it, and only specialised train-

ing can secure for it such a worthless improvement in learning as it is capable of. But in the higher forms of imbecility, in which the arrest of cerebral and mental development takes place late in childhood, some time must elapse before it dawns upon those who have to do with the child, and have no medical insight, that it is not *compos mentis;* and until that discovery is made, the child is often, because it is thought to be indolent or obstinate, subjected to great cruelty and over-pressure."

A larger question than *dulness,* however, in connection with educational over-pressure in elementary schools, perhaps the largest and most important of all, is that of STARVATION. There are in elementary schools in the poorest districts of London a large number of half-starved children. "In one of the Board Schools there were on the day of inspection 36 per cent. of the parents out of employment; 40 per cent. of the children came to school sometimes without a breakfast, and 28 per cent. came sometimes to afternoon school without any dinner. In another school, and that by no means the worst as regards the condition of the children, in which 475 were examined, 129 of these were pointed out to me as being half-starved, and their faces gave doleful confirmation of the fact; while 15 declared that they had had no food that morning. Those who announced that they were breakfast-less were all boys, and I was told, and satisfied myself, that it was useless to put questions on that subject to the girls, who are too sensitive to acknowledge *res angustæ domi* before their companions. The boys blurted out their privations at once, but when a standard of girls, in which a teacher had reason to know that several were without breakfast, was asked whether they had come to school without that meal, there was no response. It was only by the flushing of a pale face here and there that the truth could be surmised. Some inkling also of the prevalence of hunger might be got from the fact that in this school, and two others, in which the master, through the charity of kind neighbours, had dinner-tickets to give away, the number of children who were candidates for these tickets was more than double the number he had to bestow."

"In one school visited, the head mistress assured me that to her certain knowledge as many as eight per cent. of the girls came to school without breakfast in the depth of winter; in another I conversed with six boys in a standard of sixty-six; with fourteen boys in a standard of eighty; and with six in a standard of fifty-six, who had had no breakfast that morning, and there was a dreadful monotony in the way in which, in reply to my queries as to the cause of their abstinence, the changes were rung on these answers: 'Father out of work;' 'Father in the

hospital;' 'No bread in the house;' 'Mother lays abed.' The last of these answers I came to understand was often a childish euphemism for drunkenness, or for the morning stupor that follows a night's debauch. In still another school in which starvation abounded, I learned that it was no uncommon thing for a poverty-stricken mother, perhaps a charwoman or a flower-seller, who had had to send her child to school without food, because there was neither food, money, nor money's worth in the house, to arrive at the schoolhouse in the forenoon, after she had been out and had earned a few pence, and ask to be allowed to hand in a piece of bread to her starving child. To look at these half-starved children in London schools is to be 'full of sorrow.' Very touching is it to think of the quiet heroism with which, when hunger is gnawing within, and the dull misery of want overflows them, they sit uncomplaining at their little desks, toiling at their allotted tasks, wondering, no doubt, sometimes, what it all means, but bearing their burdens patiently."

"These children want blood, and we offer them brain-polish; they ask for bread, and receive a problem; for milk, and the tonic-sol-fa system is introduced to them. And in all this there is an aggravation of their sufferings and risks. They are listless and drowsy, as all teachers know, and their drowsiness is a protective measure taken by the conservative instinct. Their blood is impoverished, and has enough to do to keep the essential vital processes going; it can spare nothing for reconstruction, and so the less wear and tear and tissue waste the better. To educate a half-starved child at all is to overpress it, and the facts that there are a number of half-starved children in London schools, and that they are not merely being educated, but prepared for examination—the same examination which has to be passed by their plump, well-fed companions—is to substantiate the statement that educational over-pressure exists."

"What are the effects of this over-pressure?" In answer, Dr. Brown refers to the diseases of the mind, and in relation to lunatics he says that in the ten years after the Education Act, the number of registered lunatics in Great Britain and Ireland increased from 71,013 to 98,871, which numbers taken in relation to population show an increase from 2·41 to 2·84 per 1,000 of population. He thinks that instead of extension of insanity there ought to have been a diminution, seeing that our drink bill has fallen from £147,288,759 in 1876 to £125,477,273 in 1883, notwithstanding a rapid growth of population, and especially as malaria, small-pox, typhus and typhoid fevers have been greatly diminished by drainage, by vaccination, and by sanitary reforms. But as there is an increase instead of a diminu-

tion there must be some new causes brought into play, or some old ones acting with augmented energy. He is of opinion that it is to be attributed to a set of conditions which have their analogue in the high pressure of modern school life; but the Education Act was only passed in 1870, and over-pressure still more recently, so that we need not look for any but faint indications of its influence in statistics of insanity for some years to come. We may be "sowing the wind, but we must wait for the whirlwind."

The Doctor goes on to speak of HYDROCEPHALUS, or disease on the brain, which during the last few years has been diminishing with infants under five years of age, but mounts up in its rate of mortality throughout childhood, youth, and mature life. And in the case of children the new factor for the increase, he thinks, is none other than brain excitement and fatigue, principally associated with the processes of education.

Dr. Brown dilates on CEPHALITIS, DIABETES, NEPHRITIS, RHEUMATISM, &c., but our space will not allow us to follow him in any detail of these diseases as they relate to over-pressure. But the subject of HEADACHES is so important, and so general among children, and especially among pupil teachers, that we must give some particulars. We, however, must limit them to the children. The question of headaches in school children is one of great importance in relation to the question of over-pressure in schools. This question has already attracted some attention. "In 1879 Dr. Treichler read to the German Society of Natural Historians and Physicians assembled at Baden-Baden a paper in which he maintained, as a result of investigations at Darmstadt, Paris, and Nuremberg, that one-third of the pupils in public schools suffer from habitual headaches, which are becoming year by year more common amongst boys and girls of school age, and which are to be attributed to brain exhaustion caused by school work. Dr. Treichler's statements were received with general incredulity. In commenting upon them, the *Times* remarked that, while we may reasonably hope that Dr. Treichler has overstated his case even as regards France and Germany, we may be quite sure that as regards this country there is no state of things at all parallel to that which he describes. Some inquiries, which I myself instituted at that time, led me to believe that he had exaggerated the evils which he deplored, but the more extended and minute inquiries which I have now been able to carry out, have conducted me to a very different conclusion. Whatever may have been the case in 1879, it is now certain that more than one-third of the children attending elementary schools in London suffer from habitual headache. I have examined 6,580 children in these schools on the

subject of headaches, and have found that 3,034, or 46·1 per cent., profess to suffer from them habitually."

Dr. Brown furnishes two tables, one to show the localisation of the headaches, and distinguishing the sexes. 36·0 per cent. of the boys, and 51·1 per cent. of the girls, suffered the pain in the forehead, 5·8 per cent. of boys and 6·0 per cent. of girls suffered it on the top of the head, and 1·9 per cent. of boys and 2·1 per cent. of girls in the back of the head.

The other table shows the part of the day the headache is most prevalent, viz.:—

Boys.			Girls.		
Morning.	Afternoon.	Evening.	Morning.	Afternoon.	Evening.
10·9 p. c.	20·2 p. c.	9·4 p. c.	14·0 p. c.	24·8 p. c.	13·7 p. c.

The foregoing figures are the *totals* of the table. The table shows the percentage of each of the six standards in which the scholars were distributed. Here we have evidence that the headaches of elementary school children in both sexes, and in every standard, fall in large preponderance on the latter half of the days, when the brain gets exhausted, and the pressure of work tells most seriously upon it. They are therefore *fatigue* headaches. It is not in the freshness of the morning, nor yet in the ease and diversion of the evening, that the day labourer feels most distress in his muscles, but in the afternoon, when they are already weary, but have still to persevere in exertion. And so it is not in the elasticity of the early day, nor amidst the more varied and restorative occupations of the evening, that the elementary school child has its fatigue headache, but in the afternoon, when its brain, already drained of energy, has to maintain an enforced activity. "My table demonstrates that morning headaches are more numerous in the lower standards, in which cases of partial starvation are most numerous, than in the higher standards, in which the children are generally better fed. It may also be shown that these headaches are more frequent in proportion to the afternoon and evening headaches in penny than in sixpenny schools."

Further examination showed the prevalence of *sleeplessness* among these scholars. The percentage among the boys was 41·4, and among the girls it was 35·9. "It is, I am told, a constant ground of complaint by parents to teachers in London schools that the children disturb the family by talking of their lessons in their sleep, and I have been shown letters from parents setting forth this specifically, and begging that lessons might be made a little less severe. But not

only somniloquency, but somnambulism is now common in school children. In one school, containing 381 boys, I found that 129 of them were sleep-talkers, and twenty-eight were sleep-walkers, and this was a school in which home lessons are insisted on. I questioned each of these boys separately, and satisfied myself that he was not speaking at random. The somnambulists gave circumstantial accounts of getting out of bed, dressing themselves, performing various household duties, and even, in some instances, of having made their way into the street. In a school of 432 girls I found seventeen somnambulists; and in another school of 382 there were twenty. Boys are affected by somnambulism and somniloquency in decidedly larger proportion than girls, a fact which, perhaps, foreshadows the greater liability of men to suffer from organic diseases of the brain."

It is thus proved, not only that over-pressure exists, but is working out very serious results, especially amongst poor helpless starving children. The time surely has come when, as Lord Percy said, "the system should be so changed as to adapt itself to the different conditions of the children, and so prevent the children being forcibly adapted to the system."

The following gem of piety is said to be the production of some saintly soul in mediæval times, and was translated later on from the Latin by a converted Brahmin:—

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

My child, it is not necessary to know much to please Me; it is sufficient to love much. Speak to Me as thou wouldst to a mother, if she drew thee near to her.

Are there any for whom thou wouldst pray to Me? Repeat to Me the names of thy relations, thy friends; after each name add what thou wouldst have Me do for them. Ask much, ask much; I love generous souls who forget themselves for others.

Tell Me of the poor whom thou wouldst relieve, the sick whom thou hast seen suffer, the sinners thou wouldst have converted, those who are alienated from thee, whose affection thou wouldst regain.

Are there graces thou wouldst ask for thyself? Write, if thou wilt, a long list of all thou desirest, of all the needs of thy soul, and come and read it to Me.

Tell Me simply how proud thou art, how sensitive, egotistical, mean and indolent. Poor child, do not blush; there are in heaven many saints who had thy faults; they prayed to Me, and little by little their faults were corrected.

Do not hesitate to ask Me for blessings for the body and mind; for health, memory, success. I can give all things, and I always give when blessings are needed to render souls more holy.

To-day what wilt thou have, My child? If thou knewest how I long to do thee good! Hast thou plans that occupy thee? Lay them all before Me. Dost thou wish to give pleasure to thy mother, to thy family, to those on whom thou dost depend? What wouldst thou do for them?

And for Me, hast thou no zealous thought for Me? Dost thou not wish to do a little good to the souls of thy friends who perhaps have forgotten Me?

Bring Me all thy failures, and I will show thee the cause of them. Hast thou not troubles? Who has caused thee pain? Tell Me all, and thou wilt finish by adding, that thou wilt pardon, thou wilt forget; and I will bless thee.

Dost thou dread something painful? Is there in thy heart a vain fear which is not reasonable, but which is tormenting? Trust thyself wholly to My care. I am here. I see everything. I will not leave thee.

Hast thou not joys to make known to Me? Why dost thou not let Me share thy happiness? Tell Me what has happened since yesterday, to cheer and console thee. An unexpected visit which did thee good; a fear suddenly dissipated; a success thou thoughtest thou shouldst not reach; a mark of affection, a letter, a gift which thou hast received. I have prepared it all for thee. Thou canst show thy gratitude and give Me thanks.

Art thou resolved no longer to expose thyself to this temptation? not to finish this book which excites thy imagination? no longer to give thy friendship to a person who is not godly, and whose presence disturbs the peace of thy soul? Wilt thou go at once to do a kindness to this companion who has hurt thee?

Well, my child, go now; take up thy work; be silent, humble, submissive, kind; and come back to-morrow, and bring Me a heart still more devout and loving. To-morrow I shall have more blessings for thee.

LATYMER ROAD MISSION,

BLETCHYNDEN STREET, NOTTING HILL, W.

MR. AULAY MACAULAY, the honorary secretary, has sent a very remarkable list of operations, which will be a surprise to our readers, but which is one example among several others of the incessant activity for good of Ragged School Institutions and Missions, with their noble bands of self-denying workers. In introducing the list, he says: "The following table of meetings and attendances will be read with interest, and will be a useful guide to intending visitors."

			No. on Books.	Average Attendance.
Sunday	9.30 a.m.,	Morning School	302	100
,,	11 ,,	Infant School	150	49
,,	11 ,,	Children's Service ..	—	80
,,	3 p.m.,	Afternoon School ..	302	213
,,	3 ,,	Infant School	150	110
,,	6 ,,	Scripture Union Class..	64	20
,,	7 ,,	Children's Service ..	—	100
,,	7 ,,	Evangelistic Meeting ..	—	40
Monday	8 a.m.,	Infant Nursery.. ..	—	18
,,	2.30 p.m.,	Mothers' Meeting ..	—	12
,,	6 ,,	Christian Workmen's Club	50 members	
,,	6.30 ,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200 members		
,,	7 ,,	Girls' do., and Night School, about 50 members.		
,,	7 ,,	Boys' Night School ..	80	31
,,	7 ,,	Prayer Meeting ..	—	6
,,	8 ,,	Gospel Temperance Meeting	—	40
Tuesday	8 a.m.,	Infant Nursery ..	—	18
,,	5 p.m.,	Farthing Bank, 800 depositors.		
,,	5 ,,	Free Library, 300 volumes, 60 readers.		
,,	6 ,,	Christian Workmen's Club, 50 members.		
,,	6 ,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200 members.		
,,	6 ,,	Girls' do., and Night School, 50 members.		
Wednesday	8 a.m.,	Infant Nursery ..	—	18
,,	6 p.m.,	Christian Workmen's Club, 50 members.		
,,	6 ,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200.		
,,	6 ,,	Girls' do., and Night School, about 50.		
,,	7 ,,	Boys' Night School ..	80	31
,,	8 ,,	Evangelistic Meeting ..	—	60
Thursday	8 a.m.,	Infant Nursery.. ..	—	18
,,	6 p.m.,	Christian Workmen's Club, 50 members.		

				No. on Books.	Average Attendance.
Thursday	6	p.m.,	Junior Band of Hope ..	80	47
,,	6	,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200.		
,,	6	,,	Girls' do., and Night School, about 50.		
,,	7.30	,,	Senior Band of Hope ..	60	33
Friday	8	a.m.,	Infant Nursery	—	18
,,	6	p.m.,	Christian Workmen's Club, 50 members.		
,,	6	,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200.		
,,	7	,,	Girls do., and Night School, about 50.		
,,	7	,,	Boys' Night School ..	80	31
Saturday	8	a.m.,	Infant Nursery ..	—	18
,,	6	p.m.,	Christian Workmen's Club, 50 members.		
,,	6	,,	Boys' Evening Shelter, about 200.		
,,	8	,,	Cocoa Concert (on alternate Saturdays), about 180.		

Besides the works enumerated, there are a Sick Children's Dinner Table, a Soup Kitchen, a Farthing Bank, and a Band of Hope; and especial attention is called to the resorts for boys and girls which are termed Evening Shelters. In many cases the mothers are hard at work the whole day, and frequently do not return until late at night. The fathers too often spend their evenings in the public-house. The poor children have no chance; they cannot go home, and but for the shelter the Mission affords would be forced to spend their evenings in the street.

Such a large amount of work necessitates both time and money. The former is in many instances given freely; at the moment our funds are extremely low, and any help that can be spared will be gratefully acknowledged.

Parcels of left-off clothing will be thankfully received.

A cheering instance of rescue is given under the head of "Reaping."

REAPING.

"Those who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them."

LETTER FROM AN OLD SCHOLAR TO HER FORMER TEACHER.

14, Sidney Square, Commercial Road, E.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."

DEAR SIR,—The above saying is true in my case. It is with feelings of deep gratitude I look back upon the times when you, sir, together with Mr. Hutton and Mr. Scott, laboured so devotedly for

many years in the dear old spot known as the Spicer Street Ragged School.

Although many years have passed away, the good seed sown so prayerfully and patiently by God-loving teachers, whose hearts were so thoroughly in sympathy with the Lord Jesus and precious souls, has borne and still is bearing fruit a hundredfold to God's glory.

I myself and five brothers, together with two sisters (one now with the Lord), will have to praise our God through time and eternity for the precious seasons spent together in the Spicer Street Ragged School.

Many times have I seen Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6, as regards sowing in tears, literally taking place, while you, sir, have been pouring out your soul for us boys to come to Jesus.

Thank God it has not been in vain.

Having for some time past become a worker in the vineyard, I know the value of a cheering line from those whom God has blessed with salvation.

With Christian regard, I remain, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

To H. Thompson, Esq. JAMES SHARPLESS.

HAPPY MEMORIES.

In 1872 I wrote a short account (under the heading "My Sister's Happy Work") of a class of rough lads in a London Ragged School. Perhaps it may prove an encouragement to those just beginning a similar work to hear of a few results from that same class.

It has continued for several years as a Young Men's Class in a separate room when the members grew too old to care to mingle with the younger ones, and to this day their teacher has never lost sight of those with whom it has been possible to keep up the intercourse, either by means of a home evening once a week, a monthly meeting for prayer, or by correspondence. Thus it has been her privilege to know that not a few are walking in the paths of pleasantness and peace, and that they have been instrumental in leading others to choose the way of life. She can look back with thankfulness and joy to the time when she commenced so tremblingly this special work for the Master, and in the blessing He has vouchsafed she would fain hope that new workers may recognise the true happiness and delight to be found in His service.

One of the brightest instances of success has been in the case of A. B., who came first to that school as a little shoeblack, not even in the Brigade, but, as they called him, "a free trader." A germ

of real nobility of character was discernible when, his teacher being anxious to secure him a situation, and thus raise him from the street life, he at once refused, because he said that, as he was, he could go in and out and wait on his mother (a great invalid), and fetch and carry home the work for her. Surely such a boy deserved to get on; and by-and-by that difficulty was overcome, he did get work at a well-known firm, and has remained there ever since, steadily making his way upwards. He married an earnest young Bible-woman, and their home has for some years past been a happy little centre of usefulness. Both husband and wife teaching in the Sunday School to which his teacher belonged, they in their turn have welcomed and encouraged the young beginners, and Amy Morton has often had the joy of conducting a Bible reading in their little home, which has proved a time of refreshing to some who now are working for the Master in distant climes, as well as to those still in England.

Another old scholar, after many years of waiting and watching, has only lately come out fully on the Lord's side; but, for gratitude and perseverance, he is indeed a bright example. Rescued from great poverty and suffering whilst quite a young lad, he has never forgotten the kindness shown to him. He has remained in the same situation first provided for him, winning the confidence and respect of his employers. Marrying very early, he has now quite a numerous family; his children are taught to look upon their father's teacher as his best earthly friend, and she has now the comfort of knowing that the seed has not been sown in vain; that, though the blessing has tarried long, it has come at last; and, with the consciousness of having Jesus as his Saviour and Guide, she feels sure that his influence will be powerful for good, both in his home and in the workshop.

Yet another instance. E. F., left an orphan at a very early age, and kindly cared for by a poor neighbour, for years remained as her lodger (though he would have much preferred a room alone), simply for the sake of the help which his earnings afforded her. He has for a long time past been earnestly working in his leisure hours amongst the poor neglected little ones around the very spot in which his days of poverty were spent, his one great pleasure being to tell them of the love of Jesus, and lead them to Him.

Space will not permit me to multiply these cases. Of course there have also been disappointments and failures, but these have taught many a lesson of patience and forbearance, which might not otherwise have been learned; and when, on the occasion of their teacher's marriage, the old members of the class were invited to a special home evening in order to bid her farewell, most abundant proof of

their love and gratitude was evinced by the cordial response to the invitation, and by the presentation of an address and dining-room clock, as a "mark of affection and esteem."

Well might Amy Morton feel that the work given her to do was indeed a happy one; and she would lovingly say to any who read this, and whose bright young lives are not yet fully dedicated to the Lord, "Begin at once to work for Him, and rest assured that He will fit you for His service, and abundantly bless you in the effort, both in this present life as well as in the world to come."

ISABEL MORTON.

LATYMER ROAD

cites the following instance of fruit from the Gospel Temperance Meetings:—

"One poor fellow, well known as a regular and habitual drunkard, had been spoken to again and again. One Saturday he got so tipsy he was ejected from the public-house, and later on was picked up by the police, who threatened to lock him up. Roused somewhat to a sense of his position, but still intoxicated, he managed to reach the mission-room, where he was got hold of, induced to sign the pledge, and after a cup of cocoa and a rest went home sobered. Knowing well he could not yet be trusted, the manager sent to his house on Monday morning and fetched him to the hall. There he had an hour's talk with him, and, in order that he might endeavour to get work, looked out an old suit of clothes for him. The coat fitted him so well, he said, 'You must have been taking my measure.' 'No,' was the reply; 'God knew you were coming, and measured you.' So again, when he expressed his gratitude for being looked after the reply was, 'It is God looking after you.' The reason of these replies becomes evident in the fact that he hardly knew of the existence of a God, and thus it was sought to lead him to the idea of One above who regardeth men. His recovery and conversion did not come all at once; gradually his eyes were opened to the truth, God graciously preserved him from falling into his old sin, he became a regular attendant at the meetings, and now this notorious drunkard, well known as such in the district, gives every evidence of a saving change, and he and his wife are members of a neighbouring church."

Notices of Books.

PASSMORE AND ALABASTER, Paternoster Buildings.

My Sermon Notes. By C. H. Spurgeon.

This is a book of rich and varied thought, and full of instruction and flashes of suggestion.

The Gospel of the Grace of God. Being Sermons delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle by Thomas Spurgeon during his father's illness. With a Preface by C. H. Spurgeon.

The father's honest and affectionate words of commendation we adopt as expressive of our own view of their merits. They run thus:—"We present to you certain of the messages which he has delivered for his Master—messages full of present power and bright with prophecies of future usefulness if life be spared."

Fronded Palms. By W. Y. Fullerton.

For half-a-crown those whose time is limited will find here spread out for their delectation a table of ample and varied fare for both heart and intellect. The book contains over one hundred illustrations, and is full of sprightly and witty talk.

"HOME WORDS" PUBLISHING OFFICE, 7, Paternoster Square.

The Crown of the Road. Leaves from Consecrated Lives. By the Rev. Charles Bullock, B.D. In rich cloth, gilt, with portraits, 5s.

The author deserves great praise for the service rendered by this truly charming book. He has given the quintessence of the biographies of Sir J. Y. Simpson, the man of science, the man of God; Frances Ridley Havergal, the sweet singer; Lord Hatherley, the Christian statesman; Elizabeth Prentiss, a daughter of consolation; Charles Pettet McIlvaine, D.D.; William Henry Havergal, and W. Weldon Champneys. This is a book that by its fascinating details holds the attention with unflagging interest.

OFFICE OF RAGGED SCHOOL UNION.

Dr. Dykes's Sermon to Ragged School Teachers. Price 1d.

This truly noble sermon, founded on the text, "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," was preached in the Scotch Church, Regent Square, on November 23rd, to a crowded audience of reverent and attentive listeners. It is the

finest statement of the great aim of the Ragged School system that has come under our notice.

S. W. Partridge and Co., 9, Paternoster Row.

The Infants' Magazine. Vol. XIX. Price 1s. 6d.

Full of bright pictures and pleasing prattle. Buy it and give it away.

The Children's Friend. Vol. XXIV.

Pretty pictures, illustrated puzzle pages, enigmas, Scripture questions, sweet songs set to music, and instructive tales, constitute a powerful claim on the home circle to be regarded as the children's friend.

Historical Records of the Young Men's Christian Association. By George John Stevenson, M.A.

An account of the origin of an association which has 2,799 branches, some of which are to be found in all parts of the civilised world, must be of interest to those who are concerned for the spread of Christ's kingdom. It has a good preface by Mr. W. Hind Smith. The book answers to its name, "Historical Records." The raw material is furnished in abundance, and awaits some master hand to weave it into a symmetrical whole.

Ragged School Work and Worthies (No. 1). By W. C. M.

Mr. Miles, who has earned some reputation by his many ingenious pictorial designs, one of which, the "Gospel Compass," is widely known and greatly appreciated, has just completed a large sheet illustrative of some phases of Ragged School work, with portraits of some of its workers. It is an ingenious conception and skilfully carried out. We feel sure that it will commend itself to Ragged School workers and friends, and would be a suitable reward for the scholars. It will be ready early in January. The price to the public will be 1s., but Ragged Schools may obtain them direct from the Ragged School Union at half-price. It will be on view and for sale at the office of the Ragged School Union.

Collins, Sons, and Co., Limited, London and Glasgow.

The Improved Illustrated Reader. No. 2, price 8d., and No. 3, price 10d.

The object of these books, as set forth in the preface, is to provide such lessons as are most likely to interest the young reader, while the words in which the ideas are expressed are quite easy of comprehension. The object contemplated, which is noteworthy, has been admirably accomplished, while good illustrations lend their charm.

JAMES CLARKE AND CO., 13 and 14, Fleet Street.

The Christmas Rose. Price 6d.

Full of pictures and Christmas talk, in poetry and prose, such as cannot fail to develop the tenderness of children.

Blind Amos and His Velvet Principles. By Paxton Hood. New and enlarged edition. 30th Thousand.

This is a book of proverbs and parables for young folk, and a sweet guide to a sunny life. It should be in all school libraries.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 27, Paternoster Row, and *Christian Commonwealth* Office, 73, Ludgate Hill.

A Year's Ministry. First Series. By Alexander Maclaren, D.D. Price 6s.

Twenty-six sermons. These have appeared from week to week in the *Christian Commonwealth*, and are here gathered into an elegant portable volume. Those who have been privileged to listen to this eminent preacher know that for intellectual power and spiritual force he has few equals. These sermons should be bought and patiently studied by those who minister in holy things, whether they be teachers or lay preachers. Dr. Maclaren is very happy in his illustrations, and in this particular will be found most helpful.

JOHN F. SHAW AND CO., 48, Paternoster Row.

Bible Light for Truth Seekers and Christian Workers. Vol. IV.

A very interesting, useful serial for all those whom the title indicates.

GEORGE STONEMAN, 67, Paternoster Row.

Sunshine. Edited by W. M. Whittemore, D.D. Price 1s. 6d. Stories, Pictures, Poems, Puzzles, &c.

The book, as the title indicates, is full of all that is bright and genial, and is an excellent specimen of pure and instructive literature.

I've been a-Gipsying. By George Smith, of Coalville.

When the second title is given to this interesting book—viz., "Rambles among our Gipsies and their Children in their Tents and Vans," its purport will be readily understood. The unwearied efforts of the canal boatman's friend having resulted in beneficent legislation, his attention is now directed to the improvement of the gipsy children. The book is artistically designed, and forms very entertaining reading. We are glad that a tardy attempt at justice has at length been granted by the authorities to Mr. Smith, and that this is being supplemented by private benevolence.

Notices of Meetings.

FOX COURT.—AN OLD SCHOOL AND A NEW DEPARTURE.

After thirty-eight years of quiet, earnest work among the poor and neglected children living in Fox Court and the neighbouring courts and alleys, Fox Court Ragged School was threatened with extinction. The school-house happened to come within the line of operations of the Board of Works in carrying out the Gray's Inn Road improvements, and the committee received notice to quit. For some time no suitable site could be found in the locality, and it almost appeared as if the history of Fox Court was about to close.

The committee were in this position, daily expecting to receive notice to vacate the old premises, when most opportunely the dilapidated tenement in which the Fox Court Ragged School was originally held was found to be in the market. In this critical state of affairs a friend deeply interested in the work volunteered to negotiate, and acquired the freehold for the sum of £1,000. The new building cost £1,000, and furnishing, &c., will cost another £100 at least. Towards this amount £875 has been raised, leaving upwards of £1,200 still to be raised to free the school from debt.

On Thursday, October 2, a number of friends assembled in the new building to witness the laying of the memorial stone by Sir R. W. Carden, M.P., and to inaugurate the opening of the new school premises. The secretary,

Mr. Thomas Fagg, gave an account of the origin and progress of the work, and enumerated the various operations carried on in connection with the school.

Sir R. W. Carden, M.P., said that Fox Court seemed to take up everything that could be of advantage to the locality, and to devote their time and attention to all sorts of schemes that would benefit those living around. The School Board is doing immense good, but cannot reach the very lowest class whom the Ragged School seeks to aid. Sir R. W. Carden then laid the memorial stone, and read the inscription thereon.

Rev. A. J. Bridgman moved a resolution expressing thankfulness to God that the site had been secured and a building erected, and spoke of the valuable work which had already been done, but looked forward to still greater things in years to come.

J. D. Allcroft, Esq., seconded this resolution, and expressed his strong approval of the course followed by the committee in confining the education to simple matters, seeking to fit the children for the real duties of life.

Dr. Cox then moved the second resolution, recognising the urgent necessity that still exists for Ragged Schools in meeting the wants of the extreme poor of London. This resolution was seconded by H. R. Williams, Esq. Both the speakers urged strongly the claims of Fox Court Ragged School for financial aid at the present important crisis of its existence.

A vote of thanks to the noble President, the Earl of Shaftesbury,

and also to Sir R. W. Carden for his help and presence, was then moved by H. W. Elcum, Esq., seconded by R. M. Beachcroft, Esq., and supported by Mr. J. Kirk, secretary of the Ragged School Union.

In the evening a social meeting of teachers and friends was held, and hopeful anticipations of great things to come by God's blessing on the work in the new premises were expressed by Mr. R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, the Rev. F. Sawday, and others.

Donations in aid of this valuable effort amongst destitute and neglected children should be sent to the secretary, Mr. T. Fagg, 136, Pentonville Road, London, N.

MORETON ROAD.

A very pleasant surprise greeted Mr. Richard Stone, the Sunday afternoon superintendent of Moreton Road Ragged School, on the evening of Oct. 10. The teachers and a few other friends had long felt that some recognition was due to this gentleman for his long and loving service in the cause of Christ and poor children. After singing and prayer, and a few friendly preliminaries, a handsome writing-table was uncovered, and the presentation took place. An address on parchment, with the names of the friends who had contributed, accompanied the presentation. A few graceful words were said expressive of the sentiments of affection and esteem of which the gift was a token. Mr. Stone, in his usual happy and hearty way, gratefully acknowledged the gift, and responded to the sentiments expressed, saying that the gift, with their expressions of affectionate regard, and his own ideal of service, made him feel, not how much, but how little, he was deserving of such recognition.

CASTLE LANE YOUTHS' INSTITUTE, IN CONNECTION WITH WESTMINSTER CHAPEL.

On Thursday evening, October 9th, the opening meeting for the winter session was held at the Institute, Castle Lane, Westminster, Mr. Quintin Hogg in the chair. This institution, which was started some five years ago for youths from fourteen to twenty-one years of age, has certainly proved a great boon to the lads of the neighbourhood, who greatly appreciate the classes and the capital arrangements for indoor recreation.

The Chairman called upon the Rev. Henry Simon, who briefly addressed the meeting, saying that it was not the first time that Mr. Hogg had come to speak words of cheer to them, and he hoped it would not be the last.

The Chairman then called upon the Secretary (Mr. Just) to read the report of the last session.

The report stated that the committee feel well satisfied with the general results, though they have not met with success in the direction of a very large attendance of members. The number of members who joined the Institute from October, 1883, to May, 1884, was 103, with an average number of paying members varying between 30 and 40, whilst the average attendance on each night was from 20 to 25. The expenditure has amounted to £82, and the receipts to almost £85.

The Chairman then addressed the meeting, stating that the secretary had expressed a wish that he should say a word of "cheer" to the boys

and youths present. He said their future entirely rests upon themselves. He was very glad to see an institute like this in progress, and it was very satisfactory to see that the boys thoroughly appreciated the classes. He thought that the indoor recreation and gymnastics were a great boon, and he advised the members to go through a thorough course of training, and not take the "rings" and have a swing, but to stick to it systematically, and in the course of their life they would not regret it, as it was one of the healthiest of amusements. Gymnastics, he said, were not all that was to be considered, they must study, and attend to the classes; they should take a pride in the Institute, for, as he said, would it not seem a very ungrateful thing to see a number of gentlemen giving their spare time to the studies of the boys and trying to make the Institute a prosperous one, and then the members to take no notice of the kindness shown to them?

Mr. R. J. Curtis, organising secretary of the Ragged School Union, said he believed in athletics, for they presented a great motive to purity and self-control. Such institutions as the present tended to raise the coming generation to a higher level.

The meeting was addressed also by the Rev. Mark Simon, the Rev. Mr. Ingram, and others. At intervals songs were rendered by friends to make the evening as pleasant as possible.

CHEQUER ALLEY.

The harvest and thanksgiving services held on Sunday, the 26th October, were a great success. The room was tastefully decorated. The platform was covered with all kinds of vegetables. The beams and walls were studded with appropriate texts of Scripture. The afternoon service was conducted by the Rev. J. Morgan, of Whitfield Tabernacle, and that of the evening by Mr. R. R. Glover. Both services were crowded, and the addresses were most appropriate. The singing of sacred songs of a festive character lent a charm to the occasion. Collections were made on both occasions—that in the afternoon yielding 14s. 3d., and that in the evening £1 1s. The afternoon collection was given to the Children's Hospital, Hackney Road. The grapes, 14lb., were sent to the Consumption Hospital, City Road, and the evening collection was given to help a young man belonging to the mission who was seeking health in a seaside home.

PEPPER STREET MISSION, BOROUGH.

The annual meeting was held on Monday, Oct. 26th, with E. Eyre Ashley, Esq., C.C., in the chair.

Reports were given by Mr. Belsham of the City Mission work, and by Mr. Newton of the Ragged School work. Mr. Sawell dwelt upon the advance made in all directions during the last fifty years. The Rev. T. S. Hutchinson, secretary of the London City Mission, gave an earnest address to the people, followed by Mr. John Kirk, of the Ragged School Union, who spoke of the Ragged School begun in 1852 in Red Cross Street, and which, after changing to Victoria Place, was united with the Mission Hall in Pepper Street six years ago.

GROTTO RAGGED SCHOOL AND INDUSTRIAL HOME.

On Tuesday, the 4th of Novem-

ber, a meeting of old scholars and friends was held in the schoolroom of the Grotto Institution, which comprises a Ragged School and Industrial Home. The occasion of the meeting, which had been convened by Miss Denham Smith, was for the purpose of saying "Good-bye" to Miss Wickham and Mrs. Lillyman, two sisters, who through ill-health were retiring from the post of day-school teachers. One of the sisters had been connected with the schools for twenty-nine years.

A number of influential ladies and gentlemen were present, all of whom were interested in the institution, and had contributed towards a money testimonial, which was given in the form of a cheque, accompanied by hearty expressions of regard and respect for valued service, by Mr. Denham Smith. The scholars showed their regard by the purchase and presentation of a clock. The company included Sir Robert Carden and Miss Carden, W. Ellice, Esq., and Lady Jane Ellice, Mr. Denham Smith and Miss Denham Smith, the Misses Farner, Miss Thompson, Miss Habershon, Miss Kindersley, Miss Ball, Miss Healy, &c. Some gracious words were said by Sir Robert Carden on behalf of the teachers and by way of thanks. William Ellice, Esq., expressed in a very happy way his sense of the services rendered, and his regret at the enforced retirement of the two sisters, and expressed a hope that after quietude and rest they might in some way make a new departure in some useful work. Mr. R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, added his testimony to the worth of the teachers and his regret at their compulsory leave-taking.

LOWER PARK ROAD WORKING LADS' INSTITUTE.

The second annual meeting of the above was held on Monday evening, November 24, 1884, when forty-nine lads and friends sat down to a bountiful tea, which commenced at 7.30. After tea, at 8.30 the business of the annual meeting commenced, which was opened with prayer by the superintendent of the Sunday School, Mr. T. H. Sanders, after which a hymn, "Sowing the seed," was sung. The chairman *pro tem.*, A. W. Parsons, Esq., B.A., called upon the secretary to read the second annual report, which stated that the Institute was doing good in this very poor district, there being a tendency to general improvement in the lads. The secretary addressed the lads upon the evils of the streets and the benefit of spending their evenings in profitable and pleasant recreation, and strongly urged those who were not members to join at once. Mr. Curtis, from the Ragged School Union, gave a very practical address. A. W. Parsons, Esq., and the Rev. R. O. T. Thorpe, M.A., said a few pleasant and affectionate words. A very happy evening was then brought to a close by the singing of the Doxology.

LAMBETH RAGGED SCHOOL SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the above society took place on Tuesday evening, 4th November, at the Horns, Kennington. In the absence of the Earl of Shaftesbury, the chair was occupied by Mark Beaufoy, Esq., J.P.

Mr. H. Johnston Campbell (hon. secretary) reported that since the presentation of the last report im-

portant changes had taken place in the constitution of the society, owing to the Charity Commissioners having at length settled the points which had been so long under dispute. At the end of 1882 a settlement in favour of the society seemed no nearer than it had been in 1876. In fact, at that time their case seemed almost hopeless; but, owing to the efforts of the committee, together with the powerful support of the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Commissioners were induced to reconsider the whole question, and to propose a scheme, the draft of which was submitted to the committee in January, 1883. This scheme was carefully considered, and, after a few minor alterations being made in it, was approved both by the committee and the trustees, and was returned to the Commissioners, who then formally signed the scheme, and enacted that it should come into force in September, 1883. This scheme was only a temporary one, but it had, at least for the present, removed one of the greatest sources of anxiety with which the committee had had to contend, in that for the next three years it had assured the schools to the poor of Lambeth, for whom they were originally built and endowed. In accordance with this scheme, the schools had been repaired by the trustees.

The Chairman said it was quite clear that the work for which these schools was intended was being most admirably fulfilled by the committee who had the management of them. Like everything else, it had had its ups and downs —its days of adversity and its days of prosperity; but they might safely say this—that whatever the exigencies of the case might have been, the very best possible use was being made of this benefaction. He would like to come before them that evening as the nephew of the founder. Allusion had been made in the report to the differences that had arisen at various times between the trustees and the committee of the Ragged School. He wished particularly to impress upon them that he did not come forward that evening as a trustee, but as the nephew of the founder. He did not wish to commit the trustees in any way, but he might say, to begin with, that the difficulties which had stood in his way were that he started the consideration of this business with two misapprehensions. The first was a too exaggerated idea of the benefits that were to be conferred upon them by the London School Board. The School Board had done, and was doing, a great work; but he thought he might truly say that it had entirely failed to reach that stratum of society for which the Ragged School was founded. In fact, they might say that in this present year of grace the Ragged School had just as much work to do, and just as much work before it, as it had ten or twelve years ago. The second misapprehension was, that he entirely underestimated the zeal of the present committee. Having at heart the realisation of his late uncle's wishes, and the desire that the best use should be made of his noble benefaction, he was anxious that they should not undertake work which the Legislature might do. They hoped the School Board would relieve them from the duty of looking after these poor children, and that

they would then be able to apply his uncle's benefaction to something else. He owned he was entirely wrong, and that the necessity still existed for continuing a work of this character.

Major Smith moved, and the Rev. A. Bourne seconded, "That the report and financial statement be adopted, printed, and circulated."

Mr. John Kirk, in supporting the resolution, thanked the chairman for his frank statement in reference to the schools. The Ragged School movement was a missionary agency, and they, as sensible people, should adapt their means to the requirements of the present day.

The resolution was carried.

Prizes having been distributed to those amongst the scholars who had kept their situations for more than a year, the next resolution was moved by Mr. George Howlett. He said he was one of the earliest connections with that school. He remembered the chairman's uncle building it, and he was one of the first scholars in the school. In those days his father was but a coalheaver, and for two seasons he attended the Sunday nights in the old Ragged School.

LEICESTER RAGGED SCHOOL MISSION, GEORGE STREET—RECOGNITION OF FAITHFUL SERVICE.

A very interesting gathering of senior scholars in connection with this mission took place on Saturday, November 15th. About seventy sat down to tea, after which Mr. William Rylett, in the name of all the senior scholars, presented a handsome chair to the superintendent on behalf of the mission, to be used as a president's chair at the meetings held in the schools. The superintendent expressed his gratification at the kind thoughtfulness of the senior scholars in presenting the schools with such a handsome and comfortable chair. It was a complete surprise to him, as he had been away through illness and for rest for a considerable time, and on resuming his labours amongst them nothing could be more welcome than the article which they had provided him with. Addresses were also given by Messrs. H. Laurence, W. Thornley, and A. Taylor. Mr. A. B. Partridge read a portion of Scripture, and several prayers were offered, with singing at intervals. A coffee supper was provided at nine o'clock, and then the meeting dispersed.

KINGSLAND RAGGED SCHOOL.

The friends of the Kingsland, Dalston, and Shacklewell Ragged School held their thirty-sixth annual meeting in Kingsland Congregational Schoolroom on Monday evening, November 24th. The Rev. E. H. Ellis (Devonshire Square Chapel) presided. The proceedings were of a social and pleasant character. Specimens of veneered table tops, the work of youths belonging to the institute, were exhibited, and elicited much admiration. Several pieces of the work had been shown at the Health Exhibition. They are, indeed, creditable to the lads, to their mechanical instructor, Mr. Coombs, and to the Ragged School Union.

Mr. Frank Day, the secretary, read the report, which stated that every department had been well carried on. During the winter months several entertainments were given before crowded audiences.

The Sunday School attendance averaged 127 in the afternoon and 163 in the evening; at the Sunday evening service the average attendance was 58. The Band of Hope was still successful. Two girls and three boys had gained certificates from the Union by keeping their situations and good characters for over twelve months. Tract distribution was going on well, but since the alteration of the day of meeting the attendance of mothers had not been so numerous. The number of depositors in the Penny Bank had increased to 190, and its transactions had amounted to over £100 during the year. An eight days' Temperance Mission had resulted in over 50 pledges being taken. The Youths' Institute had 40 members, and was doing good service.

Mr. Weeks, the treasurer, read the balance sheet, which showed a balance due to the treasurer of £27 15s. 4d.

The Rev. C. Fleming Williams moved that the report be adopted and circulated.

Mr. G. J. Hoon, superintendent of the mission, here presented to Arthur Turner, a farrier (now of Tottenham), a veneered table. It was of the lad's own workmanship, the material having been given by the institute.

The Chairman said he believed a great work had been done, and the industry of Mr. Hoon and others was very praiseworthy.

The Rev. S. Fisher seconded the adoption of the report.

The next resolution was moved by the Rev. J. East Harrison, and seconded by Mr. Kirk, secretary to the Ragged School Union, and unanimously agreed to.

ONE TUN.

The eleventh anniversary of the Westminster Youths' Institute, Old Pye Street, was held on Tuesday evening, December 2nd, 1884. Sir R. W. Carden, M.P., presided, and was accompanied by his daughter, Miss Carden. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Trevor Fielder. The motto for 1884 "Hear my prayer, O Lord," was chanted, and the educational prizes, which are provided by Mrs. Barker Harrison, were distributed in the most genial manner by the chairman. Every member of every class receives a prize, either of books or of small sums of money. In the examination of the Bible Class conducted by Mr. Payne, and for Scripture Texts on the subject "Water," both money and books were awarded. Several of the lads had written out very carefully over 300 verses. There is also a flourish-Chess Club and a successful Swimming Club. The prizes for these races are given by Sir R. Carden (two guineas) and H. Waldo Sibthorp, Esq. (£1), and are well contested. Mrs. Barker Harrison's fourth silver medal had been won the second time by Harry Spencer, and was pinned on to his breast by Miss Carden as the champion swimmer amidst great cheering. It was noted that 723 working lads of over thirteen years of age, of about 140 different occupations, had been members of the Institute since its formation in 1873, the cost of carrying it on being about £105 per annum, exclusive of prizes. A short address was given by the chairman, full of sympathy for the effort and excellent advice to the members. Admirable addresses were then given by the Rev. Trevor Fielder, by Mr.

Kirk, of the Ragged School Union, and by Mr. F. Smith, of the Band of Hope Union. A hearty vote of thanks to Sir Robert Carden was moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Bayliss, blind Bible-reader, and carried by acclamation. Airs by the band, including "God save the Queen," terminated this enthusiastic eleventh anniversary somewhat before eleven o'clock.

LIMEHOUSE RAGGED SCHOOL.

On Monday evening, December 8, was held the usual annual tea for mothers, which is provided through the kindness of Mrs. Dalton, who has had the oversight of the class for many years. From forty to fifty enjoyed the hospitality. Mr. Garner, the secretary, Miss Dalton, and other ladies kindly assisted, and Mr. R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, spoke a few sympathetic words.

DEPTFORD RAGGED SCHOOL.

The annual meeting of the supporters of the Deptford Ragged School was held at the lecture hall connected with the Lewisham High Road Congregational Church on Tuesday evening, December 9. The Rev. I. Morley Wright presided. The Rev. J. C. Wetherell, vicar of St. Peter's, Brockley, wrote expressing hearty sympathy and regret at his inability to attend. The annual report, which was read, stated that the freehold of the school premises had been purchased reasonably. The bazaar in aid of a fund to raise new buildings on this site realised £580. The Sunday School had an average attendance of children in the morning of about 170, and of teachers 16; and in the afternoon, of 260 children and 25 teachers. It was hoped a Mothers' Sunday Afternoon Bible Class would be started in the new building. The Sunday Night School, up to September 30th, 1884, had an attendance of 122. The Monday Evening Sewing Class for Girls had an average attendance of about 50. Mrs. Crocker's report of the Mothers' Meeting stated that there were 50 members. Forty-seven children attended the Tuesday Evening Service on an average. The Penny Bank was prospering. The Boot Club had supplied 92 pairs of boots in the twenty-one months. The Working Lads' Institute had an average attendance of 20. Gymnastic exercises were practised. Some lads were learning the violin. The Library had about 160 volumes. Shorthand writing and drawing were taught free. Temperance work will probably take a more important part in the school operations in future. As to the funds of the whole school, a small balance was in the treasurer's hands. The chairman said that the secular knowledge which children were receiving made it more important that they should receive religious instruction. The meeting was addressed by the Rev. Gardner Smith, Mr. J. Kirk, of the Ragged School Union, and Messrs. Hammer, Marchant, Whittall, Bristow, and Robinson. A statement of accounts was read, which showed that the schools needed nearly £600 to pay for the proposed building.

KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOLS.

On Thursday, 18th December, the annual meeting was held. The more formal business of the evening was preceded by a tea. H. R. Williams, Esq., presided till the arrival of Sir

Robert Carden. Mr. Montague read his able report, which set forth the multifarious labours of the year. The receipts for the year were over £900.

Mr. H. R. Williams moved the adoption of the report. He said the reading of the names of the operations was a speech in itself. He had never listened to a more satisfactory report. They had a large income, but the work done was cheap at the price. The institution catered for body and soul. It has some 16,000 books circulated during the year. Its Sewing Classes, Night Schools, industrial work, Singing Class, and Band, with its more religious work of schools and mission services, give the institution a great claim on the public.

Mr. Jack seconded the resolution in a speech of interest and power.

Then came the most interesting feature of the evening—viz., the distribution of prizes by Sir Robert Carden, M.P. A number of those who came up were servants who had kept their places for one year and upwards. To each of these Sir Robert said a kindly word and gave a hearty shake of the hand. Each of these young people received the beautifully-illustrated certificate awarded by the Ragged School Union, and 7s. 6d. (5s. of which is given by the Ragged School Union) also. At the end of this pleasant duty Sir Robert received a hearty vote of thanks, and retired amidst the acclamations of the audience.

Messrs. Curtis and Kirk followed with a few hearty words. The Rev. W. Tyler took some part in the proceedings.

ERNEST STREET, E.

A conversazione was held recently for the purpose of talking about an enlargement of school premises, and for doing honour to the Treasurer, who for twenty years had worked in season and out of season.

Mr. R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, presided. Mr. Samuel Hitching and other friends spoke of the necessity for enlarging the premises.

The Treasurer said that the amount in hand and promised was £230 towards the £400 required.

Mr. Rhodes, as one of the oldest members of the committee, was called upon to discharge on behalf of the friends present a most pleasant duty. In order to mark the entry of Mr. Denman into the twentieth year of his treasurership, and for important services rendered in connection with the Penny Bank, the Children's Weekly and Christmas Dinners, and the Summer Excursion, they had united to present him and his dear wife with some tokens of their love. He then asked Mrs. Denman's acceptance of a butter cooler, and Mr. Denman's acceptance of a library chair. A silver plate on the latter bore the following inscription:—"Presented to John Flaxman Denman, Esq., by the Committee, Teachers, and Children of the Ernest Street Ragged Mission Schools."

The gifts were gratefully acknowledged.

RICHMOND STREET, WALWORTH.—ANNUAL MEETING OF OLD SCHOLARS AND FORMER TEACHERS.

This interesting gathering will take place on 7th January, 1885. Tea from six to seven. Free tickets can be had of any of the present teachers, or at the office of the Ragged School Union, Exeter Hall.

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